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FEATURES

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IS THE POPE CATHOLIC?

Bay Area liberals who love Pope Francis and loathe their right-wing archbishop don't understand either man, or the Catholic Church, or the battle for the soul of their city.



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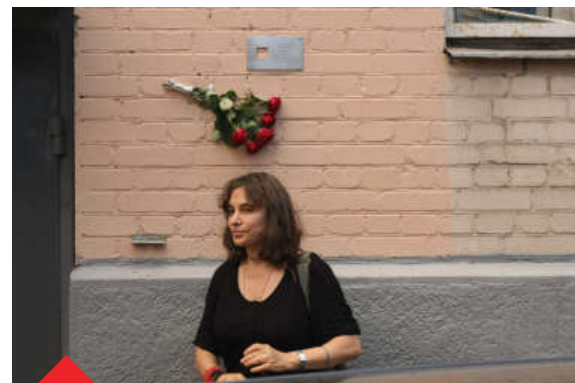
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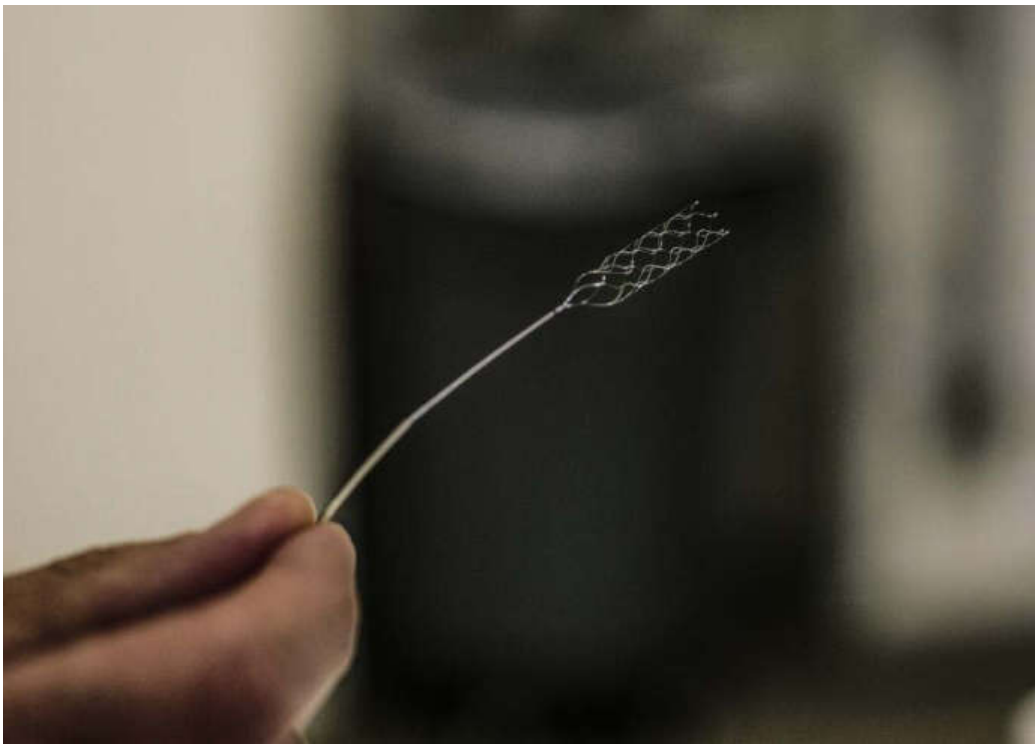
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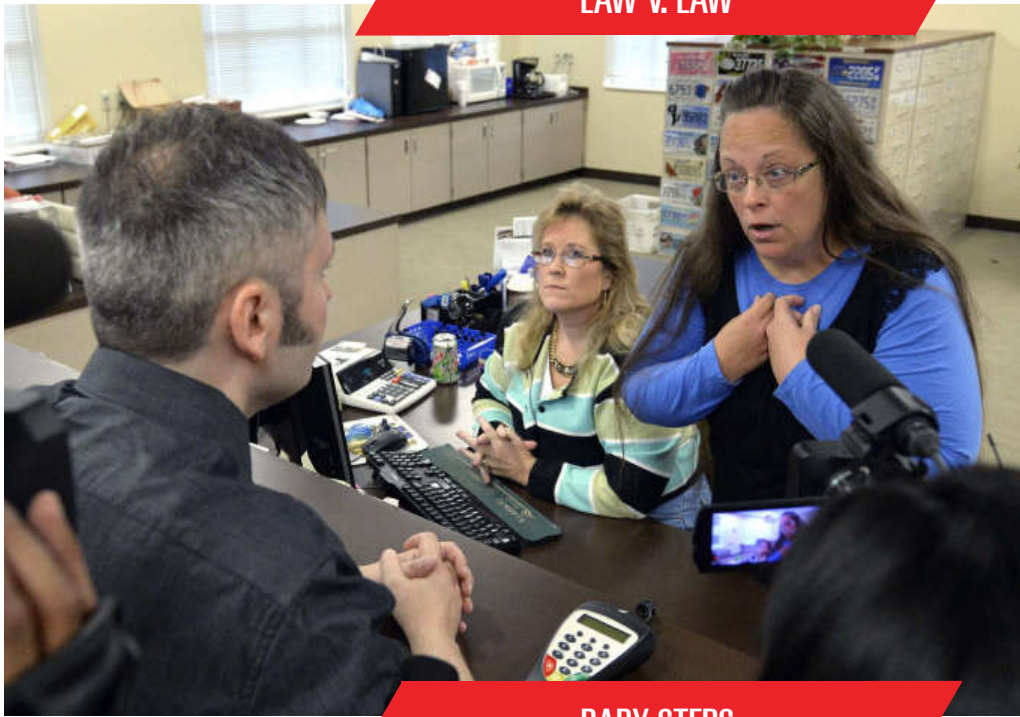
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Mark Lennihan/AP

IS THE POPE CATHOLIC?

**BAY AREA LIBERALS WHO LOVE POPE FRANCIS AND
LOATHE THEIR RIGHT-WING ARCHBISHOP DON'T
UNDERSTAND EITHER MAN, OR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,
OR THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF THEIR CITY.**

Popes don't have batting averages, their work resisting easy quantification: Souls Saved Per Mass, Doctrinal Clarifications Per Encyclical, that sort of thing. But one measure does seem especially telling about the tenure of Pope Francis, and it is the frequency with which his face and words appear on T-shirts. You can announce that

Francis is your homeboy or ask, What would Francis do (i.e., WWFD)? Francis-themed T-shirts sport his thrilling response to a question about gays: “Who am I to judge?” There’s one depicting Francis in the style of Shepard Fairey’s famous poster for the 2008 Obama presidential campaign, with “pope” replacing “hope.” There’s even an “Atheists for Pope Francis” T-shirt. The Beatles may have been bigger than Jesus Christ, but Pope Francis is bigger than the Beatles.



Sign painters move their scaffolding into position to continue painting a portrait of Pope Francis on the side of a New York City office building, August 28. The Pope visits the U.S. beginning September 22 with stops in Washington D.C., New York and Philadelphia. Credit: Mark Lennihan/AP

The near-universal adulation Francis enjoys today was anything but instantaneous. To some observers, the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio to the papacy in the late winter of 2013 was a signal that the Vatican would continue on the conservative course set by John Paul II (who does surprisingly well on the T-shirt front) and Benedict XVI (very few T-shirts). “A conventional choice,” **The New**

York Times branded the 76-year-old Jesuit,” a theological conservative of Italian ancestry who vigorously backs Vatican positions on abortion, gay marriage, the ordination of women and other major issues.” Others worried that the newly elected pope had been far too timid during the “dirty war” of his native Argentina, questioning his role in the kidnapping of two Jesuit priests. **The New Yorker called him** “an Argentine with a cloudy past.”

Francis has not offered a counterargument but, rather, a dazzling show of faith that obviates the need for arguments over what, precisely, he believes. He has washed the feet of prisoners, caressing the soles of Muslims and women. He has shunned the resplendent vestments of his office, selecting a five-year-old Ford Focus for his vehicle and a modest guesthouse for his quarters; he has made entreaties to divorced Catholics and even suggested that it was not his place to judge gay ones; he has lamented global warming and income inequality, at times sounding like Bernie Sanders’s running mate.

Lately, another Catholic prelate has been making news in the United States, for different reasons. His name is Salvatore J. Cordileone, and he presides over the archdiocese of San Francisco, home to 432,163 Catholics. Nobody in the Bay Area is wearing T-shirts emblazoned with his face. In February, **an editorial in the San Francisco Chronicle deemed** “unnecessary and offensive” his attempt to subject teachers at archdiocesan high schools to an antediluvian morality code that reached into their private lives. Cordileone’s insistence on sexual traditionalism, the paper cautioned, runs counter to “the tone of tolerance that Pope Francis has been trying to advance.”

Related: A Brief History of Pope Francis in the Headlines

Cordileone came to San Francisco ready for war. In 2008, he led the successful push to make gay marriage illegal in California. Four years later, he was appointed

to the San Franciscan archdiocese, **in what one blogger called** “the most courageously bold—or stunningly brazen—American appointment” by Pope Benedict. “This was done as a real insult to San Francisco,” a gay Catholic told me when I visited the city, which had been accustomed to archbishops who tempered their views on homosexuality with an awareness of the city’s history as a gay refuge.

Cordileone has little use for such moderation, and he has paid a price. Whether marching against gay marriage in Washington, D.C., or telling Catholic schoolteachers in San Francisco that gay sex and masturbation are “gravely evil,” Cordileone has been as thoroughly demonized as Francis has been exalted. To hear some tell it, the two barely belong to the same church.



San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, center, leads a prayer across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court during the second annual March for Marriage, in Washington, D.C., June 19, 2014. Cordileone outraged many with his vociferous (and financial) support of California's Proposition 8, which outlawed gay marriage in California. Credit: Andrew Harnik/

The Washington Times/Landov

In the first week of June, for example, **the pope paid for dozens of indigent souls to travel from Rome to Northern**

Italy, to stand personal witness before the Shroud of Turin.

Cordileone, meanwhile, was in Manhattan, making a transparent attack on Caitlyn Jenner, whose Vanity Fair cover had made news just days before. "The clear biological fact is that a human being is born either male or female," he said, adding that the erosion of traditional marriage would result in "a reversion to the paganism of old, but with unique, postmodern variations on its themes, such as the practice of child sacrifice, the worship of feminine deities or the cult of priestesses."

This commentary came during a conference supporting the restoration of the Tridentine Mass, an issue seemingly unrelated to the Jenner affair. But the incident is indicative: While Francis wants to attract new members to the church, doctrinal conservatives want a return to the Latin Mass and a more strident condemnation of non-procreative sexual behaviors.

Francis will make his first trip to the United States this fall, in what will surely prove a voyage rife with adulation; he will no doubt make many Catholics in the Bay Area wish their archbishop was the cuddly Jesuit, not the grim canon lawyer. The two men serve as irresistible foils. **A columnist for the Chronicle, for example, recently opined** that Cordileone "is out of step—with San Francisco, this country and the faithful members of this church."

But is he really? "Absolutely nothing the archbishop has said is inconsistent with what Pope Francis says and teaches," says prominent Catholic observer George Weigel, "although it may be inconsistent with media fictions about the pope."

The pope customarily celebrates Holy Thursday Mass at one of two Vatican basilicas: St. Peter's or St. John Lateran. But in keeping with his iconoclastic spirit, Francis (the first modern pope to take that name) went on his first Holy Thursday as pope to the Casal del Marmo youth prison,

where he kissed and washed the feet of a dozen inmates. Not only were two of the prisoners women but one of these women was a Muslim. “Washing your feet means I am at your service,” the pope told the young convicts.



Pope Francis washes the foot of a prisoner at Casal del Marmo youth prison in Rome, March 28, 2013. Two young women were among 12 people whose feet Pope Francis washed and kissed at a traditional ceremony in the youth prison on Holy Thursday. It was the first time a pontiff has included females in the rite. Credit: Osservatore Romano/Reuters

Cordileone recently bathed the poor too. This past spring, **a local CBS affiliate reported** that the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption, the seat of the San Franciscan archdiocese, had “installed a watering system to keep the homeless from sleeping in the cathedral’s doorways.” All through the night, the report found, a sprinkler system would spray water intermittently on the homeless people trying to sleep in the alcoves along the cathedral’s walls. The story went viral, and the night showers stopped.

Saint Mary’s is where San Francisco met Salvatore Cordileone on October 4, 2012, during his installation Mass. A thin man with a high forehead, Cordileone spoke of his grandfather, “who first settled in this city a century ago

seeking to escape the poverty and misery of his homeland” of Italy. He also referenced the “authentic joy” of Benedict, the conservative prelate who appointed him to his prominent position.

Related: Ahead of Pope Francis's Visit to U.S., Catholics More Liberal on Same-Sex Couples, Contraception

Joy is not exactly what gay Catholics experienced upon learning that Cordileone would be their archbishop. They knew he was the “Father of Prop 8,” the California ballot initiative that outlawed gay marriage. They must have known, too, that he was the disciple of Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, the culture warrior who had great influence in the Vatican of the previous pope. “In a sense, I am glad that the church is sending the top guy that they have—the top anti-gay—because it means that we, as a community of Catholics, have done something good to deserve attention,” **one defiant Catholic told The New York Times.**

Two years later, the “top anti-gay” is the top target of liberal Catholics in the Bay Area. In late April, opponents of Cordileone took an extraordinary measure, **placing a full-page advertisement in the Chronicle** that called on Francis to remove Cordileone for “having fostered an atmosphere of division and intolerance.” Signatories included Louis J. Giraud, owner of the famous Boudin Bakery, and Tom Brady Sr., father of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady.

The Vatican has not responded to this call. Nor is Cordileone contrite. In a statement several pages in length responding both directly and not to questions I sent him, Cordileone told me that “the current situation is not an excuse for Christians to run and hide. Christians are called to be ‘salt and light’ and the church is required to be engaged in society. She may not withdraw.”

Salvatore Joseph Cordileone was born June 5, 1956, the same day that Elvis Presley performed “Hound Dog” on The Milton Berle Show in a nascent display of the overt sexuality that, in the ensuing decades, would draw the increasing ire of Catholic traditionalists. Cordileone’s father, Leon, was a fisherman from San Francisco. His mother, Mary, was from Buffalo. All four grandparents were from Sicily. His last name means “lionheart.”

Cordileone grew up in San Diego and was drawn to Catholicism while a student at San Diego State University and then the University of San Diego, a religious school from which he graduated in 1978. That fall, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected to the papacy, becoming Pope John Paul II and ushering in a conservative period for the Church.



Archbishop Cordileone and outgoing Archbishop Niederauer share a laugh before the start of the press conference at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, July 27, 2012. Cordileone, center, is defiant in the face of critics, insisting that he is doing God's work. Credit: Michael Short

In 1962, Pope John XXIII had convened the Second Vatican Council, the most liberalizing force in the Church for decades, striking down the prevalence of the Latin Mass and mandating that priests face their congregations while

worshipping. Vatican II was the church of Peter and Paul preparing to enter the world of John, Paul, George and Ringo. “I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in,” John XXIII said. Not everyone welcomed the sunlight, though. Some shun it still.

The subsequent reign of Paul VI saw the publication of [the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968](#), which has long been understood as forbidding contraception, such as condoms, and the use of abortifacients, stressing the “procreative significance” of marriage.

[Related: Pope Francis Set to Announce New Catholic Annulment Procedures](#)

Paul VI was followed eventually by John Paul II, who throughout his lengthy reign was lauded for his rapprochement with Jews and Muslims. Regularly mobbed in his “popemobile,” he was the first pope to fully understand his papacy in a postmodern culture of rapidly circulating images divorced of context. At the same time, John Paul II hewed closely to the conservative sexual doctrine of *Humanae Vitae*, even as evidence grew that condoms could forfend the spread of HIV and AIDS. In 1995, the Vatican railed against safe sex, “a dangerous and immoral policy.”

Salvatore Cordileone’s Catholicism matured in the church of John Paul II. He studied canon law in Rome but eventually returned to his native Southern California. During the 1990s, he was pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Calexico, on the Mexican border. He was known as Father Sam, wore a beard and appears to have been widely liked. [In a 2009 interview](#), Cordileone recalled how he would jog along the Mexican border, watching day laborers waiting for a bus to take them into the United States. He spoke about holding an annual Mass “for the undocumented migrants living in the canyons north of San Diego and working in the flower fields.”

But then “Father Sam” became the “Father of Prop 8,” the anti-gay marriage measure that made him a hero and villain. Gavin C. Newsom, the mayor of San Francisco, started marrying same-sex couples in 2004; the state’s Supreme Court stripped him of that power but, in 2008, proclaimed that gay marriage was legal. “The ultimate attack of the Evil One is the attack on marriage,” Cordileone thundered on a radio show. “If you take marriage apart, everything comes unraveled.” He helped mobilize clergy, Catholic and otherwise, raising some \$1.5 million for the Prop 8 initiative and donating at least \$6,000 of his own. Frank Schubert, a national crusader against same-sex marriage, called Cordileone “as instrumental as anybody” in helping the measure pass, and, in 2009, [the East Bay Express](#) declared, “Without Bishop Sal, gay men and lesbians would almost surely still be able to get married today.”

Prop 8 elevated Cordileone’s stature in the Holy See of Benedict XVI, who had once called homosexuality an “intrinsic moral evil.” Cordileone would use similar language—“gravely evil”—in a draft of the handbook for Catholic high schools that caused much rancor this past spring.



Protesters tear a "Yes on Prop. 8" banner from a pickup truck as hundreds demonstrated against the Mormon Church's support of Proposition 8, that opposed gay marriage, in the Westwood district of Los Angeles, November 6, 2008. Credit: Reed Saxon/AP

Francis's most famous pronouncement on homosexuality is the rhetorical question he posed in 2013: "Who am I to judge?" But Francis has judged. **In a 2010 letter to nuns discussing gay marriage in Argentina**, he called the push for marriage equality "a destructive pretension against the plan of God" and "a machination of the Father of Lies that seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God."

"Pope Francis isn't asking us to change the timeless teachings of the Gospel," Cordileone told me. "On the contrary, he wants us to be bold in proclaiming them." This is a diplomatic way of pointing to the disconnect between how some in the secular world see Francis and how the clergy itself has absorbed his bifurcated papal persona. To nonbelievers, he is a renegade who will soon ordain female priests and fly a rainbow flag from Vatican spires. To more perspicacious observers, he is a skilled custodian of Catholicism's image who is acutely aware of how his words and deeds will play beyond the Vatican's ramparts. If he is

vastly superior to Cordileone in any single regard, it is that of public relations.

Cordileone's first year in San Francisco passed without incident. In January 2013, he appeared at an anti-abortion march, which didn't surprise anyone. But the following year, he announced he would attend a rally in Washington, D.C., in support of traditional marriage. Nancy Pelosi, the liberal congresswoman from San Francisco, **warned Cordileone in a letter** that the March for Marriage would be "venom disguised as virtue." He went anyway.

"That is our very nature," **Cordileone said at the march**, "and no law can change it."

This past winter, the archbishop took on the allegedly lax morality plaguing Catholic schools, introducing new language into the faculty and staff handbook for the four archdiocesan high schools in San Francisco and Marin County under his direct control. **The first draft of the new handbook** included more than a dozen "affirm and believe" statements, many of which focused on sex:

II

[We] reject direct, intentional abortion and recognize that any well-formed conscience always rejects direct, intentional abortion; we are not “pro-choice” [We] affirm that chaste living necessarily requires abstinence from all sexual intimacy outside of marriage We accept the Church’s teaching that all extra-marital sexual relationships are gravely evil and that these include adultery, masturbation, fornication, the viewing of pornography and homosexual relations.

Everyone within the Catholic schools would be “expected to arrange and conduct their lives so as not to visibly contradict, undermine or deny these truths.” The new handbook counseled its subjects to “refrain from public

support of any cause or issue that is explicitly or implicitly contrary to that which the Catholic Church holds to be true.”

This raised obvious, troubling questions. Would a teacher at a Catholic high school who posted on Facebook about his wife’s successful fertility treatments be subject to discipline? What about a female teacher who tweeted about the blissed-out weekend she spent with her girlfriend in Point Reyes?

“Our schools are not seminaries,” complains Sal Curcio, who was raised in the Catholic Church in the Bronx and now teaches religion at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory. “Teachers are starting to feel like they have to decide between conscience and paycheck.”

Others were troubled by Cordileone’s tactics in contract negotiations with the high school teachers, who are represented by a union. In seeking to make all school employees “ministers,” he appeared to want to deprive them of federal workplace protections, from which religious institutions are at least partly exempt.

Related: What Pope Francis Has Missed on TV Since He Stopped Watching in 1990

The day I met with some of Cordileone’s opponents in the Catholic schools, he had released a revised handbook that doesn’t mention “gravely evil” acts. The overt reference to school employees as ministers in the contract negotiations was gone too. And yet they were not mollified, convinced that Cordileone had only hidden his sword behind his back. “He is a cultural warrior in the extreme,” said a retired religion teacher, Jim McGarry. He added that Cordileone “doesn’t represent the tradition; the tradition is much richer than that.”

Star of the Sea is the kind of church Cordileone has been tasked with saving. Located on an unglamorous stretch of Geary Boulevard, in the Inner Richmond neighborhood, it had seen drops in membership in recent years. Long gone are

the days when Irish immigrants filled the pews. Cordileone's solution was to bring in the Reverend Joseph Illo, a tall man with exceedingly white hair and a plangent smile. There is something ungainly about him, and that somehow makes the priest likable, a quality he desperately needs these days in San Francisco.

Illo has never been shy about his intentions in San Francisco. Last year, as he prepared to leave his parish in Modesto, in California's Central Valley, he turned to his blog to raise money: "We need your daily prayers as we prepare to enter the beautiful but savagely distorted cultural maelstrom that is the 'Baghdad by the Bay.'"

In another post, he said: "In a few weeks I will begin priestly ministry at a parish in the City of San Francisco. This beautiful city has been a war zone between the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, and the angelic and the demonic for many years."

He quickly got to work. In late January, Illo banned altar girls from Star of the Sea. **As the Chronicle explained**, Illo "believes there is an 'intrinsic connection' between the priesthood and serving at the altar—and because women can't be priests, it makes sense to have only altar boys."

Weeks later, controversy visited Star of the Sea again, this time at its school: Some students had received a sexually explicit pamphlet that asked them if they dressed immodestly, entertained "impure desires" or committed sodomy. Supporters of Illo claim that the distribution of the pamphlet was inadvertent, and that Illo was unaware of its contents.

Things only got worse with **a revelation in the Chronicle in April** that Illo had emotionally abused an 11-year-old girl back in Modesto who had come to him in 2001 with accusations of sexual molestation against a fellow parish priest.

“Rather than protect, and minister to the 11-year-old who was confused and in pain,” read a plaintiffs’ statement, “Fr. Illo breach[ed] the child’s confidences by forcing the child to confront the offending priest. The pastor and the offending priest then called the child a ‘liar,’ yelled at her and then defamed her mother, by insinuating to the 11-year-old that her mother was ‘fabricating’ the allegations against the offending priest because ‘all she wanted to do was have sex’ with the pastor.”

The church paid damages of \$20,000 related to the emotional distress caused to the girl by the two men (no criminal charges were filed). A canonical investigation chided Illo, reminding him “to be aware that he is an attractive man, physically, spiritually and socially,” and said he should seek “improvement of his pastoral management skills.”



Greg Caput carries a representation of Jesus Christ' crucifixion during his 7th "Walk for Life" rally and march, January 24, in San Francisco. Thousands of abortion opponents gathered at Civic Center Plaza in front of City Hall before marching down Market Street to Justin Herman Plaza while chanting and carrying signs that called to end abortion. Credit: Alex

Washburn/AP

Cordileone did not respond directly to my question about whether he knew of Illo's questionable behavior in Modesto before hiring him. "In his zeal Father Illo made some mistakes," he said, noting that he has removed him from administration of the Star of the Sea school. He also pointed out that "the parish has found new life and is now thriving."

Illo has other supporters. Among them is the Reverend Joseph D. Fessio, an avuncular Jesuit who vociferously defends Catholic doctrine against liberal encroachments. Throughout our conversation, he nervously checked his phone, hidden in the folds of his priestly garb: The Golden State Warriors were playing the Houston Rockets in the NBA playoffs. At one point, he exhaled and smiled, having learned of the Warriors' victory. It was a moment of small but universal grace.

About the faith, Fessio is less upbeat. "Don't ask us to change our church," he said.

Another supporter, Eva Muntean, who had organized a picnic in support of Cordileone that was reportedly attended by several hundred people, was indignant about what she perceived as a smear campaign by the gay community. She wanted the archbishop's critics to remember that during the worst of the AIDS epidemic, it was the Catholic Church that cared for the sick. Mother Teresa, whom Fessio knew, opened a hospice in San Francisco at a time when some hospitals refused to see AIDS patients. To be accused of homophobia now that the plague has receded enrages Muntean.

"Nobody would touch the dying except for the Catholic Church," she says.

Liberal Catholics have two options: They can rationalize away some of the church's sexual morality codes while

tuning out others, finding some scrappy foothold on the rock of faith. Or they can leave.

Vincent A. Pizzuto has done just that. He was raised Catholic in northern New Jersey and studied at a Franciscan college in upstate New York. He earned a doctoral degree in New Testament studies in Leuven, Belgium, and now **teaches** theology at the University of San Francisco (USF). Pizzuto is gay, and despite a nearly palpable devotion to the Christian faith, he left the church that, to his chagrin, would not abandon its sexual fixation. Though he continues to teach and write empathetically about Catholic theology, Pizzuto, who lives with his partner in Marin County, is a priest in the Episcopal Church, which is far more welcoming to gays than is Catholicism.

“If you want to hate the church, you've got your straw man,” he complained over coffee. He fears that Cordileone plays all too readily into the hands of those predisposed against the very notion of the church. Nevertheless, he explained that Francis and Cordileone are “not as far apart as they might seem doctrinally.” The difference is mostly in tone. Though Cordileone may seem like an aberration, “all he is doing is upholding or highlighting” church doctrine, which Francis has sometimes chosen to downplay.

Related: What to Expect From Pope Francis's Tour of the U.S.

Not that Francis has seduced everyone with his public shows of progressivism and humility. A lengthy Salon essay argued that Francis is an “old-school conservative who, despite his great PR, maintains nearly all of the social policies of his predecessors and keeps up a hard-line Vatican ‘cabinet.’ He has done virtually nothing to change the policies of the church to match his more compassionate rhetoric.”

Francis has maybe promised too much to doctrinal (and political) liberals impatient with the pace of progress while frightening traditionalists who argue that faith should

be immune to political pressures, whether from gays or greenies. Francis's popularity with American Catholics has fallen from 89 percent to 71 percent in the past year, according to a Gallup poll conducted over the summer. And he is decidedly unpopular with American political conservatives, only 45 percent of whom see the pope favorably. That's a drop of 27 percentage points from a year ago.

Apostasy, though, is not quite as easy as switching your gym membership. Some will remain with the church of their youth, even if its doctrine sometimes feels like a personal affront. I met with the group Dignity SF, an organization of LGBT Catholics, and asked how they could remain part of a faith that seems to loathe them. In response, one of the four men gathered (he asked me not to use his name) read from the writings of a Catholic scholar: “Above the pope as an expression of the binding claim of church authority stands one’s own conscience, which has to be obeyed first of all, if need be against the demands of church authority.”

Those words were written in 1968 by Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict and gay-marriage opponent; the “primacy of conscience” argument, as it is known, is often used by gay Catholics to reconcile their faith with the explicit homophobia of the Vatican. Critics, however, charge that the words are being taken out of context.

Appeals to conscience have also been deployed by doctrinal conservatives who fear Francis is a renegade straying from his flock. Cardinal Burke, often regarded as the most vociferous conservative prelate in the American church, **has said he would “resist” any attempts by Francis to liberalize Catholic doctrine on social issues.** “The pope does not have the power to change teaching, doctrine,” Burke said.

Pizzuto, the USF scholar, agrees with the fundamental premise of gay Catholics like those in Dignity SF, who argue that Catholic teaching has become all but irrelevant

to modern understandings of human sexuality. “The Bible is completely silent on the issue of homosexuality as we have come to understand it in the modern world,” he told me. That view is supported by many scholars, including the late Yale theologian John E. Boswell, whose landmark 1980 book, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, argues that Catholic enmity against gays developed in the late Middle Ages. Even so, the Catholic Church of 2015 is deeply uncomfortable with homosexuality, regardless of how many scholars argue that the Genesis narrative of Sodom and Gomorrah is really about Israel’s ancient code of hospitality.

As Pizzuto and I continued to talk, it became clear that he left the Catholic Church not only because of his sexuality but because he had come to feel the church was excessively occupied with sex. “I just want to follow the Gospel,” he said. “I’m tired of fighting over these ridiculous issues.”

The Most Holy Redeemer Church is in the middle of the Castro, the most celebrated “gayborhood” in the world. The church has been here for just about a century, catering at first to Italian immigrants with blisters on their hands, and then, much later, to gay men with lesions empurpling their bodies. During the worst of the AIDS crisis, MHR ran a hospice in what had been a convent. The chapel still contains a scroll inscribed with the names of those claimed by the virus, a graceful record of tragic length that tumbles to the floor.



Hundreds of same-sex marriage supporters stand in the middle of Castro Street while celebrating the U.S Supreme Court ruling regarding same-sex marriage on June 26, in San Francisco, California. The high court ruled that same-sex couples have the right to marry in all 50 states and dealt a major blow against Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, one of the chief architects of Proposition 8 in the state. Credit: Justin Sullivan/Getty

Recently, MHR has become known for **its Wednesday night suppers for the homeless**. Several dozen bedraggled men and women crowd into an auditorium, where they are served meals restaurant-style by volunteers. There is no waiting line to have food slopped onto a plate; instead, a kind of scruffy formality pervades. A doctor is sometimes at hand, as is a barber. Free clothes are routinely distributed.

Archbishop Cordileone has served food at the Wednesday night dinners. He knows the church is home to gay Catholics, yet everyone I spoke to said he takes great pleasure in the event. His presence there shows “a softer, more pastoral side” of the otherwise severe archbishop, **noted the National Catholic Reporter**, which insisted that his appearance there was no media ploy: “He waited on tables without fanfare, requesting no photographs be taken.”

His visits to MHR are hints of a persona more complex than that of the self-righteous homophobe. Another hint was his willingness to meet with gay Catholic groups while in Washington for the March for Marriage last year. “May more bishops follow his lead in personally learning more about Catholic LGBT people and advocates,” wrote **New Ways Executive Director Francis DeBernardo**. He was not talking about Pope Francis.

Cordileone told me he has learned about the power of “personal encounter.... When you get to know someone on a human level, see that they are human just like you and have similar struggles and the same deepest yearnings, you cannot hate them.” He added, “Most people benefit from hindsight, and I’m certainly one of them.”

Related: Pope Francis Calls on Catholic Institutions to Take in Refugees

Yet the fighter still remains. Just days after writing those seemingly conciliatory words, he was in Manhattan, declaiming against gender transition and (presumably) Caitlyn Jenner. He must have known that would make news. Sure enough, by the following afternoon, various news outlets were denouncing Cordileone’s views as “sad” and the archbishop himself as a “nightmare.” But then, weeks later, Cordileone was in front of Congress, **urging immigration reform**. There was no sign of the firebrand. The battle with the Catholic schoolteachers is over too. In August, they signed a contract free of the fire-and-brimstone language that Cordileone introduced in the spring.

“To be very frank with you, it's somewhat of an enigma to me why he would have been appointed to this diocese by Benedict,” Pizzuto says, a statement less of malice than of befuddlement. As we sat in the clear afternoon light, he quoted Thomas Merton, the great mid-20th century theologian: “The living tradition of Catholicism is like the breath of a physical body. It renews life by repelling

stagnation. It is a constant, quiet, peaceful revolution against death.”

When I asked him about an ideal archbishop for San Francisco, Pizzuto answered with a single word: “Francis.” He reiterated that point when we spoke in early September, right after Francis announced that any priest could forgive a woman the sin of abortion during the forthcoming Holy Year of Mercy. It was “a profound and beautiful pastoral move on the part of Francis,” Pizzuto wrote to me. “This is typical Francis: put the gospel into action rather than just preach about it.” He suggested that, in time, Francis would be canonized a saint.



Pope Francis touches his ear as he leaves after his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015.

Credit: Alessandra Tarantino/AP

Others, though, were less impressed by the decree of clemency. “The supposedly radical change in the Vatican’s approach to abortion is being dramatically overblown in the press,” **wrote the traditionalist Notre Dame theology professor John C. Cavidini in the New York Daily News.**

Cavidini argued that “the change proposed here is pastoral in nature, not doctrinal. It is intended to emphasize that the Church is an agent of mercy, primarily, and not an agent of condemnation.” Abortion remains a sin, it is just that sinners will have a slightly easier time achieving absolution.

Certainly, the liberal Catholics of San Francisco would welcome an archbishop in the mold of the current pope. But how serious, really, is Francis about discarding the more hidebound elements of Catholic doctrine? Will he ordain female priests? Will he welcome gays? Is his gentle touch merely a personal affect, or does it portend a more significant shift within the Vatican?

Probably not, history says—the history of the Church, as well as the personal history of Jorge Mario Bergoglio.

This pope is a superb communicator. He winks at his two disparate constituencies, like a politician hoping to win votes in the liberal cities with one message and the conservative hinterlands with another. Both sides are made to feel that they are getting the real Francis.

Cordileone, conversely, can be grating, offensive, flat-footed and righteous in the most elemental sense. He knows what God wants from him, and it isn't flattering headlines.



Brennan Linsley/Reuters

HOW A BOTCHED TRANSLATION LANDED EMAD HASSAN IN GITMO

HASSAN'S STORY OFFERS A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF DOZENS OF MEN WHO SAY THEY'VE BEEN ACCIDENTALLY ENSNARED IN THE WAR AGAINST AL-QAEDA.

“Do you have any connection to Al-Qaeda?” the man asked.

It was the spring of 2002, and Emad Hassan was sitting in a chair in a small tent, hands cuffed behind his back. Standing in front of him were a young American soldier and his Arabic translator. The soldier barked at him in English, a language Hassan barely understood, and the translator repeated his words in **broken Arabic**.

For weeks, Hassan, a small, soft-spoken 22-year-old with dark skin and curly hair, had been held by the Americans in Afghanistan. Born and raised in Yemen, he traveled to Faisalabad, Pakistan, in the summer of 2001 to study the Koran at a small university. But **one evening** the following spring, Pakistani authorities burst into the house he shared with 14 other foreign students and brought them to a nearby prison. After two months of beatings and interrogation, the Pakistanis handed him over to the U.S. military.

Related: Judge Orders U.S. to Prepare Guantanamo Force-Feeding Tapes for Release

Eventually, Hassan found himself in front of the young American in what he later learned was the U.S. military prison in Kandahar. Confused and afraid, his lawyers say, Hassan decided it was best to continue telling the truth. “Yes,” Hassan said, according to his lawyers, he had a connection to Al-Qaeda. He waited for the next question, but the soldier and the translator seemed satisfied. The interrogation was over. What was lost in translation, Hassan’s lawyers say: The soldier thought he was talking about Al-Qaeda, the deadly terrorist group. Hassan was actually referring to Al-Qa’idah, a village 115 miles from where he grew up in Yemen.



When interrogators asked Yemeni national Emad Hassan if he was connected to the terrorist group Al-Qaeda, he told them he'd lived near a town with a similar name. Credit: Department of Defense

Weeks later, prison guards came into Hassan's cell. They stripped him of his clothes and put him in a diaper. Then they blindfolded him, placed earmuffs over his head and marched him onto a plane. When the aircraft landed, he soon learned he was in the U.S. prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. What had started as a comic misunderstanding became a

surreal odyssey through the dark side of America's war on terror.

'The Worst of the Worst'

In his satirical novel, **From the Memoirs of a Non-Enemy Combatant**, writer Alex Gilvarry tells the story of Boy Hernandez, a fashion designer mistaken for a terrorist. Like Hassan, Hernandez is sent to Guantánamo Bay. But while Gilvarry's fictional journey has darkly humorous twists (Hernandez's PR agent is named Ben Laden), there is nothing funny about the ordeal that prisoners—some of whom are allegedly innocent—have endured behind bars at the U.S. facility.

After the September 11 attacks, the U.S. government used parts of the longtime U.S. Navy base at Guantánamo to hold prisoners who Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld **called** "the worst of the worst" in the fight against Al-Qaeda. Some detainees like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the **alleged mastermind of 9/11**, are widely considered hardened terrorists. In recent years, however, new information has undercut Rumsfeld's claims and **indicated** that few Gitmo detainees were major players in the war against America.

But Rumsfeld's words stuck, both in the minds of the public and the people who worked at the prison. "Especially in the early days, everyone was pissed," says Brandon Neely, a guard when the first detainees arrived on January 11, 2002. "People knew people that died in the twin towers. We had friends in Afghanistan. We wanted to do what we could to get revenge."

Years later, when Joseph Hickman arrived for guard duty in 2006, Rumsfeld's view was still the norm among Gitmo staff. "They just pushed into our heads that they were the worst of the worst and that if you turned your back on them for one second they'd kill you," says Hickman, the author of *Murder at Camp Delta*, which investigates **the mysterious deaths of three Gitmo prisoners**.

Both former guards say they witnessed Americans treating the prisoners cruelly, from beatings to public humiliation. But perhaps the most disturbing evidence comes from *Guantánamo Diary*—a wrenching memoir by Mohamedou Ould Slahi, a Mauritanian inmate imprisoned there since 2002. Published in January after a long legal battle, the heavily redacted book portrays the staff at the U.S. facility as bungling, bureaucratic and brutal. In Slahi’s rendering, interrogators tasked with uncovering information to save American lives seem more concerned with covering up their mistakes, pleasing their bosses and confirming their own misplaced assumptions. The Pentagon declined to comment on the veracity of the book. But in a statement, Commander Gary Ross, a Defense Department spokesman, says, “The suggestion that DoD personnel, the overwhelming majority of whom serve honorably, are or ever were engaged in systemic mistreatment of detainees is false and does not withstand scrutiny.”



A sign on the road leads to Al-Qaidah, a town in central Yemen. The town has no connection with the Al Qaeda terrorist organization; the words mean 'the base' or 'the foundation' in Arabic. Local people applying for passports often claim to be from elsewhere, as having documents with the name Al-Qaidah on them can present them with travel problems in many parts of the world. Credit: Tim Smith/Panos

Newsweek was unable to speak to Hassan directly, and the U.S. government has offered little information about Guantánamo and prevented reporters from speaking to the 779 who have been imprisoned there. “It is our policy not to comment on the specific detainee status [or] details,” spokeswoman Army Colonel Lisa Garcia of Southern Command, which is responsible for military activities in Central and South America and the Caribbean, tells Newsweek, a line echoed by the Pentagon and State Department. But Hassan’s story—reassembled from public documents, transcripts of his conversations and interviews with former intelligence officials and Hassan’s legal team—offers a glimpse into the lives of dozens of men who say they’ve been accidentally ensnared in the war against Al-Qaeda like dolphins in a trawl line.

For years, the White House has been trying to close Gitmo, but critics in Congress are afraid that former detainees pose a threat to the U.S. and its allies. As of early September, 52 of the 116 prisoners who remain at the U.S. facility have been cleared to be set free, a tacit admission, critics say, that they should never have been imprisoned. A cause for delay, a State Department representative says, is finding countries that are willing and able to accept detainees. None have been charged with a crime. Some have spent years on hunger strike, force-fed by the prison's medical staff, waiting in purgatory for a release they fear is never going to come. Others, such as Hassan, never completely gave up hope.

A \$5,000 Bounty

The U.S. military base at Guantánamo Bay looks oddly suburban. There's a Pizza Hut and an Irish pub, a Blockbuster video and a gift shop selling "I Love Gitmo" lip balm. Walk a few minutes outside of the camp and the island looks like a Caribbean paradise: steep coral cliffs and iguanas lounging in the sun, red-purple sunsets and blue waves lapping at the shore.

Yet from the moment Hassan arrived there in June 2002, his experience was harsh, his lawyers say. The guards alternated between beating him, shackling him for hours, forcing him to strip and having him crawl around on the cold, metal floor. He was given a number—680—and sometimes housed in Romeo Block, a notorious part of Camp Delta, located on the easternmost edge of the camp. There, the guards often kept detainees naked for days and sometimes sexually harassed them in hope of making them confess, according to several detainee accounts. (Hassan's lawyers at Reprieve, an international nongovernmental organization, say he doesn't talk about this part of his imprisonment; it's too upsetting for him.)



Military personnel are supposed to inspect each occupied cell at Guantanamo's Camp 5 every two minutes. Credit: Brennan Linsley/AP

Those early days were grim for Hassan. “I was interrogated from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.,” he told his lawyers, finishing each session feeling exhausted and afraid. Once again, Hassan’s interrogators asked him about his ties to Al-Qaeda. This time, the Arabic translators were able to clear up the earlier misunderstanding, his lawyers say, but Hassan’s interrogators didn’t believe him. Though he was never charged with a crime, classified **Defense Department notes** obtained by WikiLeaks show the government thought Hassan was associated with a terror cell trying to attack American soldiers in Afghanistan. They claim he visited Al-Qaeda’s Al-Faruq training camp in Afghanistan and traveled to the mountainous region around Tora Bora, where they believe he fought U.S. forces pursuing Osama bin Laden. He then allegedly fled to a safe house across the border, where the Pakistanis captured him and handed him over to the U.S.

Related: Report: Obama Administration Drafting Plan to Close Guantanamo Bay

The government files link that capture with another ambush conducted in Faisalabad that night, which led to the apprehension of Abu Zubaydah, once **thought to be** a high-level Al-Qaeda recruiter. What the documents don't make clear, however, is that these ambushes were part of a large, coordinated raid led by American authorities. "It was the largest raid in the CIA's history," says John Kiriakou, an ex-CIA officer and one of the mission's co-leaders. (He was later **imprisoned** for nearly two years for **emailing a reporter** the name of a fellow officer.) Fourteen houses were raided and 52 people were taken prisoner that night, he recalls. At each location, Pakistani security forces burst in and made arrests, as a CIA and FBI representative waited outside. The CIA officer then took the men to a U.S. safe house for questioning while the FBI agent gathered evidence.

Hassan's house, Kiriakou says, was a last-minute addition. Each house was targeted because it had been in frequent electronic contact with an Al-Qaeda affiliate. But Hassan's had just one short call on record. The day before the raid, an unnamed foreign government called to give the CIA a tip; an informant said it was an Al-Qaeda safe house.

That night, Kiriakou and a Pakistani police officer drove past the large home, which is located in a middle-class neighborhood. They wanted to make sure they wouldn't be ambushed the next day. "I can tell you that something bad is going on inside that house," the Pakistani officer told Kiriakou. "It is 105 degrees today, and all of the windows and the shutters are closed—it has to be boiling in there. They have something to hide."

The CIA remained in Faisalabad only long enough to see their captives off to their next location. Kiriakou concedes that he lost track of the "lower-level guys." He was focused on the major players.

Yet he does recall a series of errors in the lead-up to the raid. The reason: faulty intelligence. One suspected

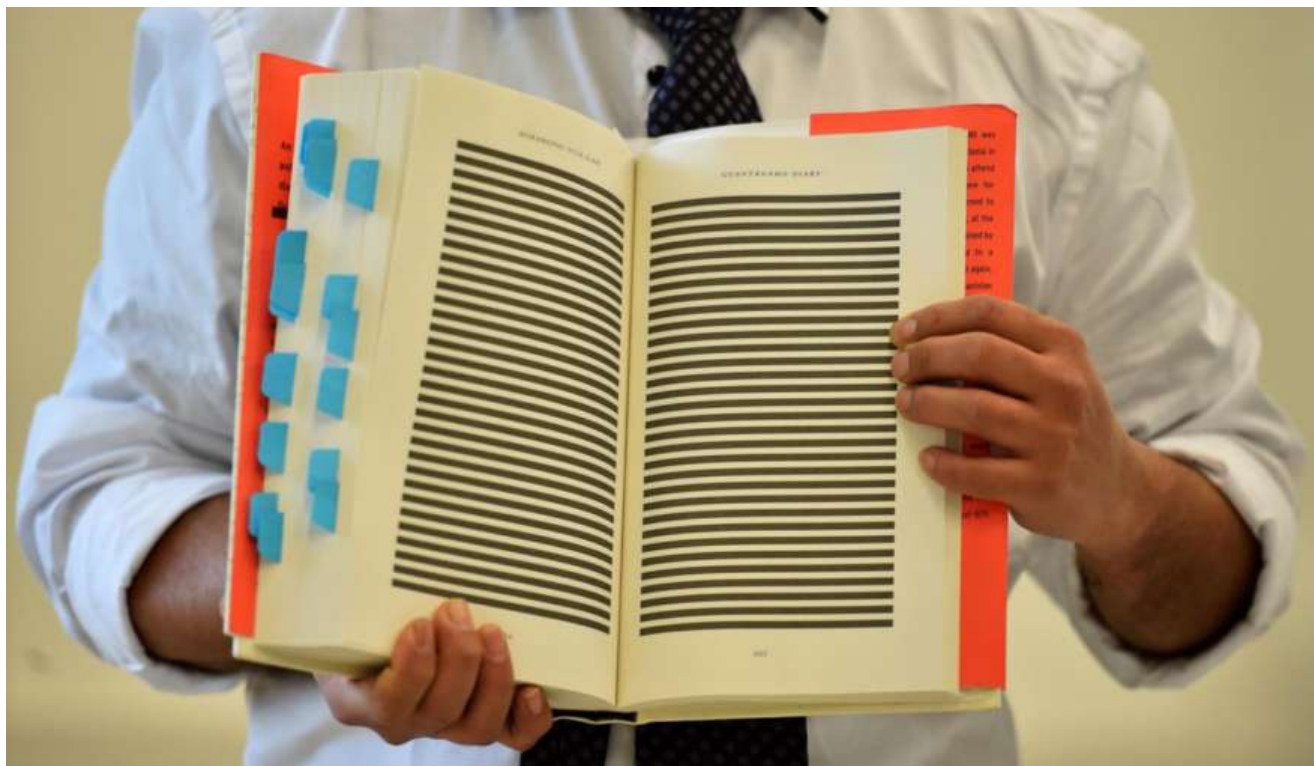
safe house turned out to be shish kabob stand with a pay phone (the agency realized the mistake before it went in). Another was a girls school. The CIA-led team stormed in and arrested an old man and his two sons. The agency later discovered the men had allowed strangers to use their phone for 5 rupees per call. “Were there innocent Arabs in some of those houses?” Kiriakou says. “I wouldn’t be surprised if the answer was yes.”

Hassan and his lawyers say the U.S. government’s claims about his Al-Qaeda connections are false. The Pakistani forces who took Hassan from his student housing, his lawyers say, received \$5,000 from the U.S. military. This was typical. According a 2006 [analysis](#) by the [Center for Policy and Research](#) at [Seton Hall University Law School](#), the vast majority of detainees at Guantánamo Bay were [arrested by local groups](#) eager to profit from the counterterrorism gold rush. “Get wealth and power beyond your dreams,” reads one flier mentioning the bounties. “This is enough money to take care of your family, your village, your tribe for the rest of your life.” Handing over Al-Qaeda suspects was lucrative for the government in Islamabad too. As former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf wrote in his 2008 memoir, [In the Line of Fire](#): “We have captured 689 [enemy combatants] and handed over 369 to the United States. We have earned bounties totaling millions of dollars.”

As for the terrorist training camps, Hassan says he had never been to Afghanistan before American forces took him there. His lawyers claim much of the U.S. government’s incriminating information comes from a small group of informants at Guantánamo who told interrogators what they wanted to hear. Many sold out their fellow detainees for small rewards. Some reportedly received [PlayStations](#) and [pornography](#) for their assistance. Others were [mentally ill](#) or say they were tortured, Hassan’s lawyers say. “It didn’t matter what the evidence was,” says Mark Fallon,

former deputy commander of the Criminal Investigation Task Force, an organization created in 2002 to investigate detainees captured in the war on terror. “You could have 10 witnesses stating that the detainee was not at an Al-Qaeda training camp. [But] if one detainee said he kinda looked like someone that was there, if there was any suspicion that someone might have been involved, they would not have them released.”

Slahi, the author of *Guantánamo Diary*, offers a similar account. He **says** interrogators at Gitmo beat him, molested him and prevented him from sleeping. In the end, he says he offered a false confession and implicated people for crimes they didn’t commit—all to make the pain stop. His rewards included a television, the ability to write whenever he wanted and his own garden where he grew mint for tea.



The younger brother of Mohamedou Ould Slahi, Yahdih Ould Slahi holds up a copy of Mohamedou's prison memoir 'Guántanamo Diary,' showing pages that were redacted by the U.S. government. Credit: Ben Stansall/AFP/

Getty

Hassan, however, never informed on other inmates to make his life easier, his lawyers say. “Emad continued to carry the hope of getting out and going back to his family again because of his absolute belief that he has not committed a crime towards the U.S. or any other party,” says

Sami Al-Hajj, an Al-Jazeera journalist and former Gitmo inmate, in a letter to Newsweek.

Related: Former Guantanamo Prisoner Arrested at 15 is Released on Bail in Canada

Instead, nearly two years into Hassan's stay, he began leading intermittent hunger strikes among the other inmates. Doing so is considered a form of disobedience at Guantánamo. According to the Defense Department, Hassan has been assessed with **at least 132 infractions** during his time in the U.S. prison, including assault and throwing his feces at guards. These acts periodically earned Hassan time at what is now known as Camp 5. Here, prisoners are kept in solitary confinement and given orange jumpsuits, a prayer mat and a hole in the ground to use as a toilet. If the guards and others felt his behavior was improving, they'd move him back to a cell in what is now called Camp 6, a more comfortable place to live, where detainees receive white uniforms, blankets, books and the freedom to interact with other prisoners.

As Hassan was shuttled between these two camps, he appeared before a military tribunal and once again told the U.S. military it had made a mistake.

"The interrogators have asked you about your association with Al-Qaeda?" a tribunal member asked.

"Yes, I believe so," Hassan said.

"Have you told them the same thing that you are telling us?"

"Yes."

"Then why do you believe you are here?"

Hassan laughed.

"How can you ask me this question?" he replied. "This question should be asked to you."

Dr. Jekyll

The interrogations continued. But during Hassan's early years at Guantánamo he didn't have a way to dispute his detention. That is, until early 2005, when attorney Douglas Cox, then a lawyer for the firm Allen & Overy, arrived at the prison to meet him for the first time.

Months earlier, the Supreme Court had ruled against the Bush administration and decided it was unconstitutional to deny Gitmo inmates an attorney and the ability to challenge the basis of their detention in American courts. Cox told Hassan his family had hired him, but initially Hassan didn't trust him; his experience behind bars made him wary of Americans. "After you have been burned by hot soup," he told his lawyer, "you blow in your yogurt."

Related: U.S. Military Bans McDonald's and Other Food From Gitmo Legal Meetings

Though Hassan was suspicious, Cox's first impression was positive. "Emad is sharp.... Discussing things with him was very easy," Cox says. "For him, the biggest problem was simply whether it was good to pursue these cases. He was skeptical it was going to change anything [and]...he didn't want to legitimize the process that kept him detained for that long."

The two met again on August 30, 2005. But Hassan was on yet another hunger strike. He felt helpless and could no longer stomach the green beans and soggy chicken cutlets the guards brought to his cell. "I tried to persuade him to stop," Cox says. "We were scared about long-term effects to his health." But Hassan, like dozens of other inmates who say they were arbitrarily sent to Gitmo, refused. A week later, Cox learned the guards had begun force-feeding his client—a process a fellow hunger striker **described** as "like having a dagger shoved down your throat." The military has **said** it humanely feeds and treats inmates who refuse to eat.



A military doctor holds a feeding tube used to feed detainees on hunger strike at Camp Delta, part of Guántanamo Bay, June 26, 2013. Credit: Joe Raedle/Getty

In the beginning, the guards took Hassan to a prison hospital, where the force-feeding was conducted once or twice a day. By 2007, when Hassan began what would become one of the longest hunger strikes at the facility, the protocol had changed. The guards would stand outside his cell and order him to lie facedown on the floor with his hands behind his back. They would enter, shackle his arms and legs, and put him in a chair that had extra restraints. Then a doctor or nurse would thread a lubricated tube through a nostril, down past Hassan's throat and into his stomach. They would then tape the top end of the tube to Hassan's forehead and attach it to a bag filled with a vitamin-fortified liquid, like Ensure. Hassan was force-fed more than 5,000 times, a process that Cox and Hassan's current lawyers say became torturous: Hassan developed chronic pancreatitis, one of his nostrils swelled shut, and he frequently vomited and defecated blood, sometimes as the

process was underway. His weight plummeted to just under 90 pounds.



The compliant detainee media room in Camp 5. Credit: Debi Cornwall

Yet Hassan's relationship with prison staff wasn't all negative. "There were good guards working today," Hassan once told his lawyers at Reprieve, who took over Hassan's case after Cox left his firm. "I was talking to one of them. I said that we are not asking for much in our hunger strike—just our basic human rights."

"680, we do care," the guard said.

"Tell the higher-ups, then."

"I did," the guard replied. "They don't listen to us either."

When the guards are kind to inmates, Hassan says, they're often punished, not rewarded by the prison. "When guards show us that they respect us, when they respect our humanity, we respect them," he told his lawyers. "Unfortunately, these guards are in the minority." Ross, the

Pentagon spokesman, says “all credible allegations of abuse are thoroughly investigated, and appropriate disciplinary action is taken when those allegations are substantiated.” Former guard Joseph Hickman recalls an instance in which one guard reported another for detainee abuse. “The guard that reported received all kinds of threats,” says Hickman, “but a few weeks after, the guard he turned in got promoted.

Related: [ISIS Used Guantanamo as Model, Former Hostage Says](#)

One doctor, whom Hassan called Dr. Jekyll, was widely feared among the inmates. “If you looked at him the wrong way, he would put you on discipline for seven days,” Hassan told his lawyers at Reprieve, referring to punishments that included beatings and sleep deprivation. “No one did as much harm as him. He believed that the tougher he acted, the faster he would be promoted.”

Yet many have **objected** to the prison’s policy, including a Navy nurse who was recently **reassigned** after threats of discharge for refusing to force-feed detainees. “There was a good nurse. You will have heard about him by now,” Hassan told his attorneys. “If you were sick, he would let a force-feeding go by, so you did not get sicker.” A medical officer, whom Hassan referred to as Dr. R, once sat on Hassan’s bed and cried over how the staff was treating him. “I joined the military so I could go to med school,” Hassan says the doctor told him. “And now I’ve ended up force-feeding brothers.”

Reading Harry Potter in Gitmo

On May 21, 2009, President Barack Obama stood in front of a podium at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., looking calm and confident in his black suit and dark tie. It was only four months into his first term. As he began his remarks, Obama explained why he was pushing to close Gitmo and creating a task force to review the cases of those trapped in legal limbo. “The record is clear,” he said. “Rather than keeping us safe, the prison at Guantánamo has

weakened American national security. It is a rallying cry for our enemies. By any measure, the costs of keeping it open far exceed the complications involved in closing it.”

That year, Obama’s task force cleared Hassan for release—a process that requires six federal agencies to agree that a prisoner doesn’t pose a national security threat. “The fact that he...[was] cleared for release for more than five years,” says Clive Smith, one of Hassan’s lawyers from Reprieve, “is an admission that there...[was] no reason to hold him. There never was.” Yet Hassan remained behind bars. On December 25, 2009, a Nigerian trained in Yemen attempted to bomb a Detroit-bound airplane, prompting Obama to impose a blanket **ban** on transferring Yemenis out of Gitmo.

In May 2014, Alka Pradhan, another one of Hassan’s lawyers from Reprieve, met him in a small, air-conditioned metal shed across the road from Camp 5. The room was furnished with a table and chairs, along with a sink, a toilet and a cot. In the corner was a camera to allow guards to monitor the meeting. The last time Pradhan saw Hassan, he was growing a large Afro in preparation for a Skype video chat with his mother—an occasional privilege at the prison. “All the other guys in the camp were making fun of him,” Pradhan recalls. “But he was like, ‘Look, this is going to make my mother laugh.’”

This time, Pradhan says Hassan entered the room wearing cornrows and an oversized orange jumpsuit that hung from his tiny frame. The guards had shackled his arms and legs. When he sat down, Hassan smiled; Pradhan had brought him a care package from the Guantánamo Bay McDonald’s: pancakes, biscuits, juice and a meatless Egg McMuffin. Though he was still on hunger strike, Hassan **ate during meetings** with his lawyers, which only took place about three times a year. “He ate a little bit,” Pradhan recalls. “He definitely had some of the hotcakes. He tried the Egg McMuffin, but he couldn’t get much of it down.”



Guards stand next to a television showing a cartoon as journalists visit the movie room at the Camp 4 detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, December 10, 2008. Camp 4 houses the most "compliant" detainees where they live in a more open, community oriented manner. National Geographic programs and cartoons are popular with detainees. Credit: Mandel Ngan/Reuters

Food wasn't the only thing on Hassan's mind that day. For all his anger and frustration with the force-feedings and long captivity, what he mostly wanted to talk about was books, says Pradhan. He was fluent in English, and in Camp 5 detainees can spend one hour a day alone in a windowless room, shackled to the floor, sitting in an old arm chair, either reading or watching TV. The chair, says Pradhan, "looks like your grandfather smoked and coughed on it for 40 years," and the book **selection is limited**: William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is banned, as is John Grisham's *The Innocent Man* and Frederick Douglass's *An American Slave*, **along with Slahi's memoir**. But in the decade-plus since he entered Gitmo, Hassan had immersed himself in American culture. Some of his favorite books include *Twilight* and *Harry Potter*. "He sees himself in some of the characters, and he draws lessons about fortitude," says Pradhan. "He says,

‘Maybe I’m not that much different from everybody who reads these books.’”

‘It’s Not Who We Are’

During his State of the Union address in January 2015, President Obama renewed his vow to close Guantánamo. Some prisoners will be set free and relocated to countries that will take them. Others—such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—are set to be tried by military commissions. **Dozens** are considered too dangerous to be released, but there’s not enough evidence to charge them. The Pentagon is currently **looking for a facility** that will take them in the United States . “As Americans, we have a profound commitment to justice,” Obama **said**. “It makes no sense to spend \$3 million per prisoner to keep open a prison that the world condemns and terrorists use to recruit... It’s not who we are.”



Human rights activists dissatisfied with the Obama administration's failure to close Guantánamo protest in front of the White House wearing orange jumpsuits with black hoods in Washington D.C., January 11, 2010.

Credit: Jacquelyn Martin/AP

Some lawmakers fear that former Guantánamo prisoners are ripe for recruitment. Earlier this year, Republican

senators pushed **a draft budget bill** that would further limit the transfer of Gitmo detainees. “The war on terror has reached a lethal phase,” South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, a GOP presidential hopeful, **told Fox News** in January. “It is insane to be letting these people out of Gitmo to go back to the fight.” Recidivism data from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence indicate 17.9 percent of former detainees became directly involved in “terrorist or insurgent activities” after their release. Yet it’s unclear what involvement entails. A Seton Hall University School of Law **report** from 2012 suggests the definition is overly broad, **including** those who have “spoken critically of the government’s detention policy.”

As for Hassan, on June 12, 2015, Gitmo guards came into his cell at night. Once again they took off his clothes and put him in a diaper. Once again they stripped him of his senses with a blindfold and earmuffs, and once again they led him onto a plane for a long journey. Only this time, when the plane landed, **he was in Oman**. The country had welcomed him on humanitarian grounds. Reprieve and the U.S. government wouldn’t comment on his exact whereabouts in Oman, and local reporters say the government in Muscat has warned them away from trying to interview former Gitmo detainees. But more than a decade after he arrived at Gitmo, Emad Hassan **was finally free**, and nothing seemed lost in translation.



Robert Atanasovski/AFP/Getty

ANGELA MERKEL: EUROPE'S CONSCIENCE IN THE FACE OF A REFUGEE CRISIS

**DRIVEN BY HISTORY AND ECONOMIC NECESSITY, SHE
HAS SHOWN COMPASSION, CRUCIAL LEADERSHIP.**

The refugees making life-threatening journeys across the Mediterranean and through Europe have a new hero —German Chancellor Angela Merkel. While Europe has largely flailed in the face of the greatest such crisis

since the end of World War II, Merkel has provided rare leadership. The most powerful country in Europe expects to take in 800,000 people this year, four times as many as it did in 2014. Instead of tightening border controls and insisting the country has no room for more refugees, as some governments have done, the German government has made it clear that it will welcome large numbers of the people fleeing the conflict in Syria and other troubled parts of the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. Asylum seekers have taken to calling the German leader “Mama Merkel.”

The chancellor’s most significant move in the crisis was her government’s announcement on August 24 that it would no longer apply the Dublin Protocol to Syrian refugees. Under the protocol, refugees are tested to see if they first entered the European Union via another member state. If officials determine that to be the case, they can return the asylum seekers to that state. Germany also canceled all planned deportations of Syrians. The move was welcomed by the European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, as an “act of European solidarity.”

Not long ago, Merkel’s image in Europe was less sympathetic. As Greece teetered on the brink of leaving the eurozone, she and her government stood resolute in demanding that the left-wing Greek government accept new austerity measures before it could receive another financial bailout—even if it meant more economic pain for ordinary Greeks. So how to explain what appears to be Merkel’s sharp turn toward compassion?

Two key factors are shaping her response to the crisis, say those who know her. The first is Germany’s—and Merkel’s—considerable experience over the past 70 years of benefiting from the kindness of strangers. After the war, the United States and other former foes of Germany contributed huge financial and practical resources to help the country recover economically and politically. More recently, East Germans—including Merkel, who was born in West

Germany but grew up in East Germany after her Lutheran father accepted a pastorate in the Soviet protectorate—were embraced by their West German neighbors after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. “Angela Merkel shows a lot of understanding for people who flee from war and despair,” says Stefan Kornelius, author of *Angela Merkel: The Authorized Biography*. “There is no moral questioning of her motives.”

The second factor motivating Merkel has little to do with generosity. Accepting skilled and educated refugees like Syrians is in Germany’s economic self-interest. The German population is falling rapidly, in part because of low birth rates, and the German economic machine needs new workers.

Merkel’s openness to the refugees will likely have a significant impact on Europe’s broader response to the crisis. “Germany has rediscovered leadership,” says Mark Leonard, director of the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank. “Germany is the critical power on the biggest issues facing many other countries in the EU.” The country has an unusual ability to link disparate issues, says Leonard. “Germany can say, for example, that it will show solidarity with Eastern Europe on Russia because it is a good European. But Germany will also say that those countries need in turn to be good Europeans on the migration issue.”

One of the countries least inclined to be what Merkel might consider a good European partner on the crisis—the United Kingdom—had repeatedly insisted it had no room for more refugees. But on September 3, as criticism mounted of governments that stood firm against accepting more asylum seekers, British Prime Minister David Cameron appeared to bow to the growing pressure. British officials told journalists that Cameron had decided that the U.K. should accept thousands more Syrian refugees. Officials said Cameron was responding in part to a series of shocking

images of a 3-year-old boy whose body washed up on a beach in Turkey.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a significant move to help alleviate the EU's migrant crisis by canceling all planned deportations of Syrians and doing away with a rule that made seeking asylum more difficult. Credit: Odd Andersen/AFP/Getty

Europe is seeing other signs of a shift, among both politicians and citizens, on refugees. Yvette Cooper, a candidate for leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party, called for Britain to take in 10,000 Syrian refugees even before Cameron made his decision to welcome more Syrians. Ferenc Gyurcsány, a former Hungarian prime minister, hosted several refugees in his home overnight. Volunteer networks are springing up across Europe, offering shelter and food. German authorities have been so overwhelmed by donations of food, water, clothes and diapers at Munich's main train station that they have asked the public not to bring any more supplies.

The intensifying human and political drama of the crisis each day makes it ever more evident that Europe's system for dealing with refugees is overwhelmed and broken. In July alone, 107,500 people were detected at EU borders,

more than three times as many as in July 2014, according to Frontex, the EU border agency. More than 2,000 people per day are crossing the border from Serbia to Hungary to enter the Schengen area of visa-free travel, say Hungarian officials, a total of more than 150,000 this year.

The EU's response has been a complete failure, says Zoltán Kovács, a spokesman for the right-of-center Hungarian government. "It does not differentiate between those who are in real need of help. Genuine refugees are pushed together with economic migrants. We are not facing a refugee crisis, we are facing a migration crisis. People are coming here from a hundred countries around the world. It is completely unacceptable that illegal means of movement are now institutionalized."

Making matters worse, old divisions have reappeared. Germany, France and the Scandinavian countries—the liberal core of the original European project—have accepted hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers. Former Communist countries like Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, which have a shorter history of democracy and whose populations are less multiethnic than many Western European countries, are reluctant to accept more than a handful. Hungary and Bulgaria have built razor-wire fences along their borders, and Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has said the message from European leaders to refugees should be: "Please don't come." In August, Robert Fico, the prime minister of Slovakia, offered to take in 200 Syrian refugees—but only Christians. His stated reason: There was a lack of mosques in Slovakia. In early September, police in the city of Breclav took 200 refugees from a train and used pens to mark the asylum seekers with numbers on their arms. Human rights activists and Jewish groups said the procedure was reminiscent of prisoners being tattooed at Auschwitz. Officials said it was the simplest way to deal with a large number of people who did not speak

Czech or English and to keep family members together but said they would stop the practice.

Such incidents highlight how Europe has failed to produce a strategic response to the crisis, says Gauri van Gulik, deputy Europe director at Amnesty International. Merkel is likely to lead a wholesale reform of the asylum and refugee system, says van Gulik. “Germany has recognized that this is inevitable and that migration needs to be handled on a Europe-wide basis.”

The memories of 1989, when tens of thousands of East Germans fled through Hungary to the West, are helping drive Germany’s response to this crisis, says Julian Rappold, of the German Council on Foreign Relations. “The German media is referencing the experience of 1989 and the solidarity that East Germans received when they arrived in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.”

But Merkel’s position is grounded in demographics and economics as much as it is in history and ethics, says Leonard. Germans are not having enough babies, and so the population is set to decline from 82 million to 65.4 million by 2080, according to projections by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Powerful German firms have made it clear they need more workers. It may be no coincidence, then, that Germany has eased the Dublin Protocol specifically for Syrians, rather than for any other population. Forty percent of Syrian refugees now in Greece are university educated, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Many speak English and could be expected to quickly learn German. Syrian refugees who have made it to Europe have often shown remarkable courage and resilience. Now many feel they have identified a country that could give them a fresh start.

Ahmed, 28, a Syrian lawyer who was among thousands of refugees stranded at Budapest’s Keleti station in early September, left Syria a year ago. Together with his parents, his wife and their son, he had spent two weeks traveling

overland from their temporary home in Turkey to Greece, Macedonia and Hungary. As others marooned at the station chanted "Germany, Germany," Ahmed, who asked that his family name not be published, showed a handful of train tickets to Munich. "I want to live in a country that will give me security, freedom and a future for my family."



Alexander Petrosyan/Kommersant Photo/Getty

AN INTERNATIONAL RACE FOR THE ARCTIC? TRY A SLOW, SCIENCE- DRIVEN CRAWL

MOST OF THE ARCTIC ISN'T UP FOR DISPUTE. BUT THE LITTLE THAT IS WILL TAKE YEARS, EVEN DECADES, TO RESOLVE.

You'd be forgiven for thinking a new cold war is underway in the Arctic. Judging by appearances—from presidential proclamations to front-page screamers—it

seems we are deep into an arms race of naval exercises and icebreaker ships, and that any day now the winner will be announced. That country, the popular narrative suggests, will then become the oil-soaked Saudi Arabia of the frozen north, and the losers will hang their heads.

The headlines look like that because countries are acting like that: A few years ago, Russia dropped a **titanium Russian flag** 2.5 miles under water to symbolically stake claim to the disputed North Pole. Nations, meanwhile, are pushing to beef up their presence in the region. When President Barack Obama **called for the U.S.** to expand its wee fleet of two icebreakers as fast as possible while he visited the region earlier this month, it was hard not to think about Russia's formidable icebreaker fleet (it has 41, with plans for 11 more).

But all this is mostly grandstanding, according to experts. It isn't how the division of the Arctic will work, and the countries involved know it. First of all, most of the Arctic isn't even up for grabs. **A declaration** signed in 2008 in Ilulissat, Greenland, by the five nations with land territory bordering the Arctic Ocean—Denmark, Norway, Canada, Russia and the United States—committed the countries to dividing territory according to the U.N.'s Law of the Sea. That means each nation gets exclusive economic rights to the area where its continental shelf extends into the ocean, up to 200 nautical miles beyond its coast.

After 200 nautical miles is when it gets a little trickier. Under the Law of the Sea, a country that wishes to stake claim to any amount of seabed beyond that point would have to scientifically prove that their continental shelf extends that far. That requires rigorous scientific data used to map where each country's continental shelf ends—data that takes years to collect, since scientific ships have only a few ice-free weeks a year to work. Once gathered, the Law of the Sea mandates that data be submitted to a U.N. Oceans and Law of the Sea **Commission on the Limits of the Continental**

Shelf, which decides whether the science behind the maps is sound.

But there's no racing here; the U.N. commission's decision process could take months or, more likely, dozens of years, thanks to a "daunting backlog" of claims the commission is facing from around the world (it handles territorial disputes on continental shelves from all over), according to Clive Schofield, the director of research at the Australian Centre for Ocean Resource and Security and an appointee to an advisory board for the U.N. Commission, who wrote **a paper** on the topic this year. "At the commission's current rate of progress," says Schofield, "several decades are likely to pass before final and binding outer limits to national continental-shelf claims can be fixed for all states that have submitted claims." It will be years before we know into whose hands the remaining unclaimed chunks of the Arctic will fall.

And all the Arctic countries are likely to wait it out—even Russia—because this unclaimed portion of sea floor beyond their 200 nautical-mile reach is comparatively not all that valuable. The oil and gas payoff of laying claim to the center of the Arctic Ocean is likely not much compared with what countries already control. Yes, the Arctic could contain as much as **22 percent** of the world's untapped oil and natural gas reserves, but those reserves are sitting almost entirely in areas already under the jurisdiction of various Arctic countries. A U.S. Geological Survey report from 2008 found that in the part of the Arctic Ocean still up for grabs—centered on the still-unassigned North Pole—the probability of discovering a major source of hydrocarbons is **less than 10 percent**.

That might be why everyone is, more or less, playing nice in the Arctic. The U.S. signed the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008, along with the four other Arctic Ocean nations, but in distinctly American fashion, it never ratified the U.N.'s Law of the Sea, the basis for the Ilulissat Declaration,

“because of political maneuvering in the Senate,” says Betsy Baker, an associate professor of law at Vermont Law School and an expert in Arctic Ocean governance. Had the U.S. ratified it, the country would be obligated, like the other nations, to submit a scientific basis for a territory claim within 10 years; the last time the Law of the Sea was in the news, U.S. Republicans **were arguing** that dealing with these types of claims processes would infringe on America’s national sovereignty.

Still, the U.S. is deep into the process of mapping its continental shelf, and is following the rules as though it were part of the declaration, Baker says. As a member of the science crew of the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Healy during its first of two Arctic Ocean mapping cruises, Baker saw proof of the cooperation between nations undertaking the “hugely expensive and complicated” task of mapping their continental shelves. Canada and the U.S., for example, “map together notwithstanding the fact that Canada has ratified the convention and the United States has not, and in spite of a longstanding disagreement over the maritime boundary in the Arctic Ocean’s Beaufort Sea,” she wrote in **a paper** in the Vermont Law Review in 2012.

Despite this, Baker says, for years the media has been conflating the situation in the Arctic with the larger geopolitical struggles of the countries involved—like the situation in Ukraine, which has soured relations between Russia and much of the rest of the world. Those conflicts don’t really impact international relations in the Arctic and have no bearing on territorial claims there, Baker says. “I don’t want to sound as though everything in the Arctic is happening in a vacuum, but the Arctic has been a zone of cooperation and peace since after the Cold War and continues to be. There’s a lot of scientific cooperation up there.”

Of course, there are exceptions. States sometimes don’t like their scientists’ conclusions. Canada was about

to submit its Arctic claim to the U.N. commission for evaluation at the end of 2013. The data behind the claim took Canada's scientists years to develop. Then, at the last minute, "the prime minister yanked the Arctic submission, much to everyone's surprise," says Ron Macnab, a retired marine geophysicist with Geological Survey of Canada, and a past chairman of the international Advisory Board on the Scientific and Technical Aspects of the Law of the Sea.

The problem? The scientists hadn't included the North Pole in the claim, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper wasn't about to let go of the North Pole. Canada's scientists were told by the administration to "do additional and necessary work to ensure that a submission for the full extent of the continental shelf in the Arctic includes Canada's claim to the North Pole," the country's then-foreign affairs minister **announced** during a news conference.



President Barack Obama stops to make remarks to reporters as he hikes to the Exit Glacier at Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward, Alaska, September 1. Credit: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

Canadian experts openly disagreed with the decision. "In five or 10 or 20 years, we are going to have to admit that the North Pole is not Canadian," international law expert

Michael Byers, who teaches at the University of British Columbia, told **reporters**. Key members of the scientific team subsequently departed, according to Macnab, which he says amounts to a brain drain that will hinder Canada's second attempt at stating its scientific case to the U.N. "This was a political decision by an individual who had no demonstrable scientific or technical expertise concerning the matter at hand. By all accounts, members of the project team (including the foreign affairs minister of the day) were stunned by this sudden rejection of their findings," wrote Macnab in scathing rebuke **of the decision**. The administration didn't deny allegations that the order came directly from Harper, according to the **Alaska Dispatch News**.

A year later, Denmark submitted its claims, which included the North Pole. While media reports painted the move as a bald-faced "**challenge**," in the words of the BBC, to Russia and Canada, those in the know had fully expected it, according to Macnab. Many considered the subsea Lomonosov Ridge, which is connected to the North Pole, to be part of the continental shelf of Greenland, a Danish territory. "Very early on in the game, it became very clear that the Danish wedge would include the North Pole. My own sense is that Denmark has the strongest claim," Macnab says. The U.N. assessment of Denmark's claim has been going on for nearly a year.

Meanwhile, Canada will send scientists back out to the ice to try again. Macnab says a new claim submission will take years of scientific expeditions and cost at minimum \$100 million. Even then, he says, "It's a 'putting lipstick on a pig' kind of job, with no certainty that the [U.N.] commission will look at this with any credibility." Russia's first attempt at a claim to territory was rejected in 2002 on the basis of insufficient evidence, and the nation has just resubmitted its data. And even if the U.S. were to ratify the Ilulissat Declaration tomorrow, it would be 2025 before it

was required to submit a claim. Norway is the only nation to have its claim approved by the U.N., but it claimed only “a sliver” of the Arctic Ocean.

In short, by the time all the claims shake out, with Arctic ice melting rapidly, the region might look like an entirely different place.

“At one point, I looked at all outstanding submissions around the world. It would take half a century before this is all said and done,” Macnab says. And despite instances of government interference, as in the case of Canada, Macnab expects there to be a lot less of a battle over the Arctic Ocean than the press portrays. “The media tends to look for antagonisms. But in fact, until our prime minister pulled this, it was a very well-ordered process. The rules of the game had been decided upon. It’s not a Wild West sort of competition. There’s an understanding [among nations] that they are better off cooperating.”



Alexander Sorokin

PUTIN'S PUSH TO REVISE RUSSIA'S HISTORY

**PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN HAS REPEATEDLY
DECLINED TO OFFER AN UNEQUIVOCAL
CONDEMNATION OF STALIN'S THREE-DECADE RULE.**

The secret police came for Boris Shternberg on the night of October 17, 1937, at the height of Soviet tyrant Joseph Stalin's purges, arresting him in his central Moscow apartment in front of his terrified wife and teenage daughter. For the next two months, they tortured the 51-year-old civil

servant into confessing to a host of false charges, including the poisoning of the city's water supply.

His torment over, Shternberg was then shot dead, most likely with a single bullet to the back of the head, and his body dumped in a mass burial site near Moscow, according to documents later obtained by his family. Under the Soviet system of collective punishment for "enemies of the people," his family was evicted from their home, and all their possessions were confiscated. His wife was sent to a corrective labor camp for five years.

Almost eight decades on from Shternberg's murder, his granddaughter, Nina Kossman, a dark-haired woman in her early 50s, waits in the street outside the seven-story residential building where her grandfather spent the last years of his life. In her hands, she holds a gray plaque made of galvanized steel that states, with lines etched in stark black lettering, the grim details of Shternberg's life, arrest and execution. The final line gives the year, 1955, that Shternberg was finally cleared of all the charges against him. To the left of the text, in place of a photograph, is a square-shaped hole.

Kossman, a Russian-born writer and translator who lives in New York, says her grandmother trusted in Communism and always thought her husband's execution was a terrible mistake. When she was growing up, the purges were barely spoken of in the family. "This is a real thing that happened to millions of people, and it has to be brought out into the open," she says.

Shternberg's case was far from unique. In just the half-mile-long street where he lived until his death, 60 people were taken from their homes and murdered by Stalin's executioners between 1937 and 1938, when the killings reached a peak. There was little apparent logic to the arrests. Among the victims were ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Latvians and Estonians, as well as two Poles. Some, but by no means all, were Jewish. They were engineers, academics,

students, teachers, military men, architects. One was a publisher of children's books. In Moscow alone, during this same period, the NKVD, the secret police agency that would later become the KGB, shot some 30,000 people, according to Memorial, Russia's oldest human rights organization. Many others were arrested and later died in the gulag system of labor camps. There is no commonly accepted figure for the total number of people who died as a result of Stalin's policies across the Soviet Union, with estimates ranging from just over 1 million to as high as 60 million.

While an abundance of commemorative plaques honor Soviet military men and party officials in the fashionable Moscow district where Shternberg lived, the bloody history of these homes is unknown to the majority of Russians, including those who now reside behind their walls. While Memorial is permitted to hold an annual gathering in Moscow to remember those murdered by the Soviet authorities, President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly declined to offer an unequivocal condemnation of Stalin's three-decade rule.

"Moscow is a city soaked in terror," says Arseny Roginsky, Memorial's long-serving director. "But while everyone knows that lots of people died during the Stalin era, they are largely thought of as almost accidental victims, as if they were wiped out by some medieval-type plague, for which no one can be held responsible. They don't fully comprehend that this was a deliberate crime by the state against its own people."



Boris Shternberg and his wife and Kossman's mother in an undated family photo. Shternberg was taken on October 1937 when Kossman's mother was 17. Credit: Nina Kossman

That's where Sergei Parkhomenko, a veteran Russian journalist and civic rights campaigner, comes in. Last year, inspired by German artist Gunter Demnig's "stumbling blocks"—tiny commemorative brass plaques installed on the sidewalk outside the final address of victims of Nazism—Parkhomenko launched last year a crowdfunded project called Last Address. The concept is very simple. A website (Poslednyadres.ru) allows Russians to apply to have a memorial plaque installed in honor of a family member or friend murdered by the Soviet state at their last voluntary place of residence. Once they have the current residents' consent, they pay around \$60, and a plaque is produced by a craftsman. To date, there are around 80 of these commemorative signs across Moscow, with another 10 in other cities. "We've had around 900 applications from all over Russia," Parkhomenko says, as he reaches for a power drill to mount the plaque in memory of Shternberg. "But it's slow work."

Honoring Stalin's innocent victims might seem like an uncontroversial activity, but Parkhomenko has been unable to obtain official blessing for his project. "Initially, we had long negotiations with the authorities, and everything seemed to be going well. But after [the invasion of] Crimea, they stopped speaking to us," he says. "At the moment, we have an unspoken agreement—we don't ask for permission, and they don't stop us. It's anyone's guess how long this will last, though."

The project has provoked fury among nationalists. "This is not only unnecessary, it is also harmful. It is a dangerous distraction from the task of strengthening our homeland," says Alexander Prokhanov, a Kremlin-connected writer who was allied to those behind the unsuccessful 1991 coup attempt by Soviet hard-liners angry at Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms. "These people are trying to hinder Russia's development."

In Germany, the use of Nazi symbols, including images of Adolf Hitler, is banned, but Stalin is an all-too-common face in modern-day Russia. On May 9, during Russia's celebration of the 70th anniversary of victory in World War II, the Soviet dictator seemed to be everywhere: War veterans carried portraits bearing his unmistakable image through Red Square, while state television screened documentaries hailing his achievements as supreme commander in chief of the Red Army. Among the souvenirs on sale to tourists in Moscow are Stalin T-shirts, cups and decorative dishes. "He was a hero and a great man," the guide at a Stalin museum in Volgograd, formerly known as Stalingrad, told Newsweek earlier this year, as she stood next to a life-size wax figure of the diminutive generalissimo.

It's not only images of Stalin that are gaining popularity. Amid a spiraling confrontation with the West over the conflict in Ukraine, the language of Stalinist terror has made a startling return to Russian political life. Putin has labeled

Kremlin critics “national traitors” and a “fifth column.” Less than a week before opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was gunned down near Red Square, participants at a state-sanctioned march in central Moscow called openly for the “destruction” of the government’s opponents. And then there are the increasingly frequent show trials. In late August, Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov was jailed for 20 years on terrorism charges that were widely seen as both revenge for his involvement in protests against Russia’s seizure of Crimea and a warning to others not to challenge Putin’s authority. In a display of legal nihilism that shocked even experienced human rights workers, a military court in southern Russia dismissed Sentsov’s claims that he had been tortured by Russian security forces, ruling instead that his injuries were the result of passionate sadomasochistic sex sessions before his arrest. And public attitudes toward state terror appear to be shifting rapidly: A public opinion survey published earlier this year by the independent Moscow-based Levada Center pollster indicated that 45 percent of Russians believe the killing of millions of people during Stalin’s purges can be justified by “historical necessity.” That figure has almost doubled since 2013.

In this context, says Parkhomenko, the Last Address commemorative plaques take on a far greater significance than mere memorials. “We want children to see them and ask their parents about them. And for people to explain,” he says. “Russia is heading once more towards totalitarian terror. The aggressive nationalism that we are seeing now leads directly to the idea that the individual’s life is worth nothing, and that only the state’s interests are important. The Last Address project stands in direct opposition to this. We say that there is nothing more important than human life.”



JANEK SKARZYNSKI/AFP/Getty

NEARLY HALF A CENTURY LATER, A JEWISH PRESCHOOL IN LODZ

**ON TUESDAY, JEWISH CHILDREN IN THE POLISH CITY
WILL ENTER A JEWISH CLASSROOM FOR THE FIRST
TIME SINCE 1968.**

Updated | Miriam Szychowska has been hanging decorations on the wall, stocking books to read and preparing songs to sing in readiness for when 10 children

stepped into their new preschool classroom on Tuesday. But unlike in other classrooms around Lodz, one of the largest cities in Poland, the colorful drawings that cheer up the space depict boys wearing yarmulkes, and the videos the children will watch once a week feature cartoon versions of figures from the Tanakh, the sacred Jewish text also referred to as the Hebrew Bible.

Szychowska's brainchild, Gan Matanel, became the city's first full-time Jewish educational institution in nearly half a century when it opened its doors on September 1 to a small group of students ranging in age from 1.5 to 4.5 years, according to the nonprofit organization [Shavei Israel](#), which aims to help descendants of Jews connect with their roots and with Israel. Szychowska's husband, David Szychowski, is Shavei Israel's new emissary just dispatched to Lodz, and the organization says it will contribute funding for the preschool's operations.

"Opening the gan was obvious," Szychowska tells Newsweek on the phone from her new home in Lodz, using the Hebrew term for a preschool or kindergarten (the word also means "garden," as in Gan Eden). She says that before now, there was no Jewish education in the city other than the Sunday school run by the [Jewish Community of Lodz](#), which organizes lectures, religious and cultural events in the city. That simply wasn't enough, she says. "I need this for my children, for other children."

Though Lodz had a [Jewish population of more than 200,000](#) on the eve of World War II, its Jewish community, led by Rabbi Simcha Keller, now numbers [less than 400](#). During the first months of the war, about 75,000 Jews left Lodz, and approximately twice as many were recorded in the city's ghetto in June 1940, soon to be joined by more Jews deported from other Nazi-occupied territories, [according to the YIVO Encyclopedia](#). Tens of thousands of Jews died in the Lodz ghetto, and more were deported to Chelmno, Auschwitz-Birkenau and labor camps. When

the advancing Soviet army arrived in January of 1945, there were fewer than 900 living Jews in the city. Poland overall saw roughly **3 million Jews, or 90 percent of its Jewish population**, perish in the Holocaust.

Lodz once again drew Jews after liberation, but not for long. Many emigrated in the first years after the war, and the community continued diminishing under Communist rule, until the anti-Zionist purges in the late 1960s put an end to most Jewish activity in the city, including closing the doors of the Y.L. Peretz Jewish school.

“No one is under any illusion that the Polish Jewish community will ever return to its pre-war glory,” says Shavei Israel’s founder and chairman, Michael Freund. “Nonetheless, there are Jews living in Poland. They have Jewish children who need a Jewish education.”

The new preschool opens at a time when Poland is experiencing a Jewish revival. Many Jews that remained in Poland hid their roots during the Communist era, but in recent years young people in the country have been discovering family history that has been concealed for decades and looking for ways to learn about Judaism and connect with other Jews in a now-democratic society.

“People are acting upon it because there is an incredibly open environment,” where the population, especially in big cities, is “invested in idea of multicultural Poland,” says Jonathan Ornstein, who has been executive director of the **Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Krakow** since it opened in 2008. Some Jews who grew up outside of Poland, like Ornstein, have decided to move and become part of the fledgling Jewish community that has begun flourishing there.

“A lot of the attention on revival in Poland is in cities like Warsaw and Krakow,” says Ornstein. The opening of a Jewish school in a city other than these two urban centers “speaks of the depth of the Jewish revival in Poland,” he adds, and says he believes it might help

harness momentum—a functioning Jewish preschool could help grow the community in that city. “If we want to build a viable community here, we need certain fundamental things like education.”

The preschool at the JCC in Krakow, for example, expands this year from two days a week to a full-time program. Ornstein hopes that when those children are ready for kindergarten, Krakow will open a Jewish one, and then follow that with a Jewish day school, to “keep them in the Jewish education system.” These institutions take on a heightened importance in a place like Poland, he explains, since most young parents did not grow up knowing they were Jewish, let alone steeped in the Jewish religion, culture, history and values.

Originally from Krakow, Szychowska comes from a rare family whose Jewish roots were always acknowledged. Her grandmother from Warsaw survived the war with her own mother and grandmother, and began rebuilding a life in Krakow after the conflict finished. Szychowska—who was one of four women featured in [the documentary The Return](#) (her name then was Maria)—remembers going to the famous Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow with her mother and talking about being Jewish, but she was raised in a liberal rather than religious household.

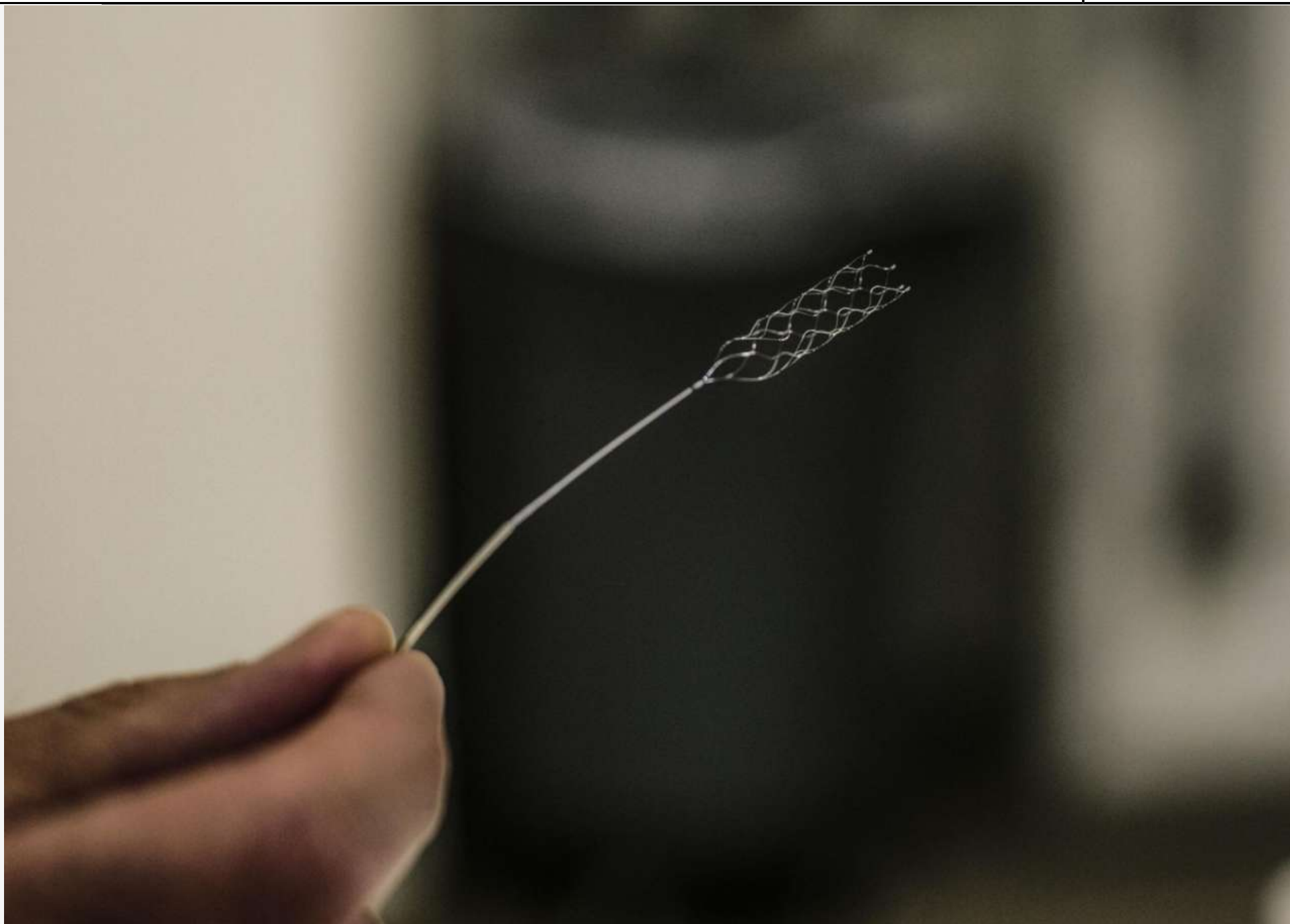
When she got older, she became involved with Krakow's JCC, working with the student club and running the early childhood education program. She met her husband, a religious Jew studying in Krakow, at a Hanukkah party at the JCC, and has since become religious as well—praying, going to synagogue and covering her head, in keeping with the Orthodox beliefs. After spending a few years in Israel, she and her husband returned to Poland and settled in Lodz in August. It's important to her to raise their children in a religious household and for them to receive a Jewish education, she says.

Szychowska is “incredibly driven” and “a very strong person who takes a lot of initiative,” says Ornstein, who’s not surprised she decided to open a preschool from scratch upon arriving in Lodz. “Nothing in the world will stop her from realizing her idea.”

Indeed, she’s been preparing furiously for the school year, making all the necessary arrangements to make sure her students will be registered in the Polish education system and working with a public school nearby that will help supervise the new endeavor. Before leaving Israel, she consulted preschool and kindergarten teachers there at length and bought materials geared toward teaching children about Jewish prayers and holidays, as well as books, games, puzzles, videos and CDs in Hebrew. Her future students will get stickers that exclaim “Yafeh!” and “Kol hakavod!” (Hebrew for feedback like “Nice!” and “Great job!”).

On Tuesday, in a small room provided by the Jewish Community of Lodz, she and a teacher she’d hired welcomed a small preschool class. Over the next few months, they’ll play in the courtyard of the Jewish Community’s building, go on outings to the museum, theater and zoo, and grow vegetables together in the garden, in addition to learning about Jewish holidays and religious traditions.

The group and classroom may be starting out small, but their presence is symbolic, says Shavei’s Freund. In August 1944, the **Nazis liquidated the Lodz ghetto** and sent its surviving residents to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Now, just over 71 years later, “Jewish children will once again be singing Sabbath songs,” Freund says. It’s a “sign that the embers of Jewish life in Lodz have not gone out.”



Whitney Hayward/Portland Press Herald/Getty

THE STENT RETRIEVER IS A STROKE GAME- CHANGER

**AFTER TWO DECADES, THERE'S FINALLY A NEW
MEDICAL PROCEDURE TO STOP STROKE-RELATED
DISABILITY AND DEATH.**

Days after taking a hard hit to the head during a boating accident, 24-year-old Brianne Cassidy had a life-threatening stroke. By the time she was admitted to the hospital, she was unable to speak or use the right side of her body.

When tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) treatment to dissolve the clot that had caused the stroke failed, doctors took a different approach: removing the clot with the help of a special stent called a “stent retriever” or “stentriever.” Cassidy’s response to the procedure was dramatic. Within minutes, she was able to move her right arm and leg, and her speech had improved. Within weeks, Cassidy says, she was “back to normal.”

Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death and the leading cause of adult disability in the U.S. Like Cassidy’s, most strokes occur when blood flow to the brain is blocked by a blood clot. Deprived of oxygen, brain cells begin to die within minutes, often causing immediate loss of function elsewhere in the body.

Since its FDA approval in 1996, tPA has been the treatment of choice for most of the 800,000 people each year who suffer clot-induced, or ischemic, strokes. But tPA is effective only when given within 4.5 hours of when stroke symptoms set in. And even then, says Dr. Gregory Albers, a vascular neurologist at the Stanford Stroke Center in Palo Alto, California, “it only works in about a quarter to a third of all patients.”

Resembling a tiny wire cage, the stent retriever is threaded through a catheter into a blood vessel in the groin, then guided up to the blocked artery in the brain. The cage then opens up and captures the clot. Then the stent, along with the clot, is removed, immediately allowing blood to begin flowing again to the brain.

In July, the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association issued guidelines recommending the use of the stent retriever in concert with tPA after five studies published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* within the past year found that stent retrievers reduced disability, improved neurological function, shortened recovery time, and increased the rate at which stroke survivors regain function. The guidelines call for use of a stent retriever

(either Medtronic's Solitaire or Stryker's Trevo ProVue) when an adult patient can be treated within six hours of the onset of stroke symptoms, has a clot in a large artery that feeds the brain and has had brain imaging that shows the brain is not already permanently damaged.

Though the devices are available at more than 1,000 stroke centers and hospitals in the U.S., only about 13,000 procedures are performed annually—mostly at comprehensive stroke centers—because they require specialized training. Albers says two or three stroke patients are treated each month at Stanford with a stent retriever device, but adds that the number will likely grow with the issuance of the new guidelines, which he calls a “landmark change” in stroke care. It's the first time the groups have recommended a device for treating strokes and the first time in two decades the group has issued a Class 1, Level of Evidence A recommendation—its strongest possible endorsement.

Follow Aimee Swartz on Twitter at [@swartzgirl](https://twitter.com/swartzgirl)



Photo illustration by Christopher Allbritton for Newsweek; Apple, Dorling Kindersley/Getty

HAS THE SMARTPHONE MADE UP FOR STAGNANT WAGES?

ECONOMISTS WHO SAY TECH IS KILLING MIDDLE-CLASS WAGES AREN'T ACCOUNTING FOR ALL THE COOL STUFF WE DON'T PAY FOR.

In 1979, “**My Sharona**” topped the pop charts and Microsoft and Apple were baby companies, founded a few years before. The majority of people in the U.S. had never touched anything that contained a microprocessor. And if

you believe the numbers, middle-class life would've been easier then than it is now.

Except that's not what the smartphone tells us.

Conventional wisdom says technology is fostering more of a financial struggle for the middle class. A recent Economic Policy Institute **study** showed that real annual wages for all but the top 10 percent of society have grown only 15 percent since 1979. That's almost no growth. If the value of what we get for each dollar spent hasn't changed much in all that time, life today would be no better than 35 years ago.

Mike Maples, a **partner** at tech investment firm Floodgate, recently sat across from me during happy hour, protesting such conventional wisdom. "The frames of reference are wrong," he said. "I mean, just look at all the products that you used to buy separately that are now collapsed into your smartphone for free."

Was Maples being flip? Or can the smartphone tell us something about our standard of living today compared with the days before computers and software spread into every pucker on the planet? The topic seemed worth exploring.

First of all, just take the **phone**—a device for talking to other people. A smartphone costs about \$200 to buy and maybe \$100 a month—\$1,200 a year—for local and long-distance calls, plus a data plan and voice mail.

In 1979, a touch-tone phone bolted to the kitchen wall cost less to buy, but local-calling service by itself cost \$325 a year, or \$1,068 in 2015 dollars—nearly the same as cell service today. In 1979, AT&T also charged exorbitant per-minute rates for long-distance calls. So you could either choose not to call your mother in another state or pay hundreds more dollars per year for the privilege. International calls cost \$1.34 per minute in 1979 (\$4.40 in today's dollars), and they're now essentially free on Skype.

Although in 1979, globalization hadn't kicked in yet, so most people didn't know anybody in another country.

If you wanted voice mail in 1979, an **answering machine** would've run about \$125 (\$410 today). Of course, it's free now. Plus, in 1979, no one even dreamed of talking by phone to someone while walking down the street. All phones were wired. You didn't call a person, you called a place. So on voice alone, the smartphone kicks some serious value-comparison butt.

Add in the most basic apps. My phone has a free calculator. In 1979, a nice **adding machine** cost \$80 (\$263 today). My phone has an address book, flashlight and calendar. None of those would've cost much in 1979, but they're free now, year after year. I also have a free weather app that gives me detailed forecasts for any location. In 1979, I remember dialing a number to get only the time and temperature, though that was free too.

How about music? In 1979, to carry portable music, you would've had to buy the first **Sony Walkman** for \$150 (\$493 today). Each album or tape cost \$9 (\$30 now). Today, a music player on my phone is free, and I can pay \$9 a month (\$2.75 in 1979 dollars) for Spotify and listen to almost any album in existence. It's been a long time since I've heard a cassette played on a Walkman through those spongy headphones, but I'm willing to bet it sounded like ass.

In 1979, you could buy a Kodak Pocket Instamatic **camera**, about the size of a deck of cards, for \$28 (\$92 now). Then you'd have to buy film every two dozen photos, and pay for the film to be processed into crappy little pictures. Now all that is free on a smartphone and immeasurably better.

Other things on my phone that I don't have to pay for: guitar tuner, file storage (Dropbox versus some big filing cabinet), compass, maps. Of course, we can now do things for free on our phones that weren't even imaginable in 1979.

If you'd marched into Jimmy Carter's Oval Office and showed him GPS turn-by-turn directions on a palm-size gadget, he'd have had you arrested and sent to Area 51 with the other aliens.

Facebook, YouTube, Kayak, Zillow, Slack, Snapchat, e-books, digital news, podcasts—all unimaginable in 1979. And then there's Google. In 1979, if you and your friends were sitting on a porch talking about *Apocalypse Now* and wondered who played that “terminate the colonel's command” **character**, you'd have absolutely no way to find out. You could've gone decades without knowing it was Harrison Ford.

This value thing is a side of technology that doesn't get mentioned in economic reports or presidential candidate rants. Yes, certainly, more jobs are getting automated by software and artificial intelligence, eliminating some kinds of jobs and ratcheting up productivity for others. “Free” can kill whole industries. Rochester, New York, is nearly denuded of Kodak factory workers. The overall impact on the job market has let employers hire fewer people or keep wages flat.

But all that software and all those lower labor costs also mean that lots of stuff is way cheaper, and usually far better, than ever. It shows up in a big way in smartphones, but it shows up everywhere else too. Stylish clothes are so cheap at H&M because of technology and globalization. Spend \$100 at H&M today and you can go home with a much better haul than if you'd spent the equivalent amount (about \$31) at J.C. Penney in 1979.

Actually, few things cost more today on a relative basis than they did in 1979. The **median home price** in the U.S. today is \$236,400. The median home price in 1979 was **\$71,800**. Adjust that for inflation and the figure is \$236,008. Pretty darn close.

So Maples's provocation wasn't just some rich guy with a vested interest trying to tell us we're not as bad off

as we think we are. Technology both takes and gives. On the whole, it has made life better for less money, compared with the pre-computer era of 1979. In fact, life today is fantastically better if you factor in not having to listen to “My Sharona” 10 times a day.



Lary Reeves

BUGS AND AMMO: SOUTHERN ARIZONA IN MONSOON SEASON

**DURING THE DESERT MONSOON, RARE INSECTS,
GONZO SCIENTISTS, IMMIGRANTS AND BORDER
MILITIA CONVERGE ON THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST.**

Before the monsoon rains lured me to southern Arizona, I had never been shot at. Nor had I seen wild rattlesnakes or the double-barreled mandibles of a **sun spider**. Certainly, I'd

never been tailed by border control vigilantes or encountered a famous entomologist in a ghost town.

In July, waters from the sky return to this typically arid region. What seemed dead in June's sweltering heat gradually comes back to life. The dun shafts of ocotillo plants burst with green leaves, and agaves bloom. Billions of ants take to the air in nuptial flights to mate, eggs of trillions more insects hatch, and grubs under logs pupate into shimmering beetles. This **arthropodal** feast brings out countless amphibians and reptiles, birds and mammals, and clouds of bats thick enough to block out the starlight.

It also brings humans, a diverse variety of the primates: Entomologists and bug-lovers of all stripes and striation; **herpers** looking for snakes and frogs; birders, bat-watchers and botanists. Tens of thousands of people come here during the monsoon for these activities, according to the Arizona Office of Tourism. Some choose to hike and photograph, some to wrangle rattlesnakes, and others to collect scorpions and spiders for private stashes or zoos.

In fact, most American zoos and insectariums with extensive invertebrate collections are either populated with descendants of this region, or owe a debt to the arthropod-husbandry experienced gleaned here. "Like moths to the blacklight we are drawn here each year," says **Jim Melli**, an exhibition designer at the San Diego Natural History Museum who, like many making this annual migration, has an extensive knowledge of the area's flora and fauna. "Rain in the desert brings it to life in a beautiful and mysterious way, and that's the magic that brings people here."

Melli is one of a couple hundred people who make the annual trek to the **Invertebrates in Education and Conservation Conference**. The meeting, which takes place in southern Arizona in late July, began in the early 1990s and attracts bug enthusiasts, zookeepers, educators and scientists from around the world. Attendees take in talks on such topics as how to best captively raise tiger beetles, a

voracious coleopteran predator, and hear progress reports on subjects like the re-introduction of **the endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly** to the Pacific Northwest. Vendors sell black widows and scorpions, ant queens and **vinegaroons**, a prehistoric-looking arachnid with claws and a whiptail that make it appear much more dangerous than it is. And an amiable, fast-talking man named Zack Lemann, chief entomologist at the Audubon Insectarium, can be counted on to make up arthropod-themed rap songs at a moment's notice.

One favorite here is the pepsis wasp—a large, attractive insect with copper-colored wings also called the tarantula hawk (since it eats the large arachnids). These deadly hunters have the second-most painful sting in the insect kingdom. Entomologist **Justin Schmidt**, who came up with the Schmidt Pain Index for ranking the most agonizing insect stings, **wrote** that being pricked by one causes “immediate, excruciating pain that simply shuts down one's ability to do anything, except, perhaps, scream.” He compared it to the feeling that “a running hair dryer has just been dropped into your bubble bath.”

Schmidt lives in Tucson and spends the monsoon season exploring nature. His passion and work are the same, he says; the excitement he felt upon first discovering a vinegaroon on a dark monsoon night was “beyond description.” I run into Schmidt while exploring a ghost town called Ruby with entomologist **Lary Reeves** and his girlfriend. The famous scientist, distinguished by a floppy green felt hat and a moustache, appears like something out of a dream, and then invites us to watch that evening as hundreds of thousands of Mexican free-tail bats come out to feed on insects.

After talking for a while, he gets out his net and snags a few velvet ants, which are also known to deliver nasty stings. He proceeds to thrust a jar into the net, and gently ushers the insect into it. “I'm one of the only

entomologists to never use a killing jar,” he says. (Field biologists sometimes kill venomous insects in jars filled with substances like acetate, in part so they don’t get stung.) They probably helps explain why he’s been hit a handful of times by tarantula hawks and bullet ants, a tropical species that inflicts the most discomfort of any insect. “Pure, intense, brilliant pain,” is how he describes it. “Like walking over flaming charcoal with a 3-inch nail in your heel.”

This part of the Southwest is where the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts, each with their own unique ecosystems, merge. Multiple mountain ranges give rise to “ **sky islands**,” housing diverse forests and meadows, and stretch into Mexico, providing corridors for tropical species. There is more biodiversity in the Sky Islands region than anywhere else in the U.S., says Shipherd Reed, the communications manager at the University of Arizona’s Flandrau Science Center.

The region’s geography also gives rise to the North American monsoon, whose mere existence comes as a surprise to many (who may be more familiar with the **South Asian variety**). A monsoon is characterized by a seasonal reversal in winds, along with a change in precipitation. Most of the year, winds blow into Arizona from the west and northwest. In the summer, especially in June, the region becomes extremely hot and dry. This creates a low pressure system that sucks in winds from the east and south, carrying moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, Gulf of California and the eastern Pacific. As the air is forced upward by various mountain ranges, especially the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains — which run northward like a spine up the western edge of Mexico — it drops rain. This water is reabsorbed into the air during the hot days and blown northward, gradually spreading the monsoon rain like a plume to the north and into Arizona and New Mexico. Both

states can get up to half their yearly total of rain during the monsoon, which stretches from July to mid-September.

That's why many tropical species occur here and nowhere else in the U.S. One such creature—found mostly in Mexico, besides a few rare spots in Arizona—is the lowland burrowing tree frog (*Smilisca fodiens*), a handsome brown-and-green amphibian that spends most of the year underground. It's rare to hear its magnificent mating calls, uttered during a time of explosive activity during the monsoon season when it briefly comes above ground to breed.

When I arrive in Phoenix, around 10 p.m. on a Saturday in mid-July, Reeves and Trace Hardin, who runs a *snake-breeding company*, pick me up to go see these frogs, and search for a type of snake called a sidewinder that we end up not finding. There is a small wrinkle, though: they happen to live in the Vekol Valley. Cut off from the sprawl of Phoenix by mountains, and made up of federal and tribal land, this piece of the desert has become notorious as a *corridor* for drug and human trafficking — in 2010 several people, including a deputy, were *shot here*, and in June 2012 *five bodies were found* burned inside a charred SUV.

If you were to show up without having done any research, you'd get the idea pretty quickly; there are *signs to dissuade you* from entering. "Danger - Public Warning: Travel Not Recommended," declares a notice we pass, posted by the Bureau of Land Management. It further states that we are entering an "Active Human and Drug Smuggling Area," and that "Visitors May Encounter Armed Criminals and Smuggling Vehicles Traveling at High Rates of Speed."

But we don't stop. Upon pulling into a spot where we will meet two others, my compatriots see something. "Rattlesnake!" exclaims Reeves, as he and Hardin jump out of the car. Reeves, almost done with a Ph.D. in entomology at the University of Florida, has a habit of chasing creatures whether he has a net or not; he often grabs them with his

bare hands. Hardin shares this predilection for running after animals from which most people would flee; his **Instagram** account contains many photos of him holding snakes, often alarmingly close to his face.

The two laugh gleefully as they pursue and take photos of the snake, which is the exact color of the desert: a thousand and one variations of sandy brown. A few moments later, a car arrives with field biologist Aaron Chambers and one of his friends. Chambers is a large man with a deep tan who always wears tank tops, shorts and sandals, despite the prevalence of snakes and cacti. A fierce friend to those he likes, he says he "is only social during the monsoon season," surrounded by like-minded naturalists. "At all other times, people can fuck off." He also carries a .38 handgun, and is extremely knowledgeable about the area's fauna and flora.

"That thing will ruin you," Chambers bellows, before approaching to get a good look at the serpent. It's a Mojave rattlesnake (**Crotalus scutulatus**), the venom of which possess potent neuro- and hemotoxic properties, attacking nerve and blood cells.



A Mojave rattlesnake, found by Lary Reeves and his team, in the lawless Vekol Valley. Credit: Lary Reeves

After a few more photos, we take off for a stream where the frogs live. We trudge through thick mud, leavened by cow pats from wandering cattle, and joke that in the dung-filled milieu we might contract hookworm. (Later, while changing out of my shoes, I accidentally step on a bombardier beetle, which shoots boiling-hot liquid out of its rear end onto my heel, staining my skin a reddish hue for weeks.) Soon we find Colorado river toads the size of small toasters. These are the United States' biggest toads, and their skin contains psychoactive tryptamines that can cause hallucinations. Anthropologist Wade Davis **describes the effects of smoking** its venom this way: "Shortly after inhalation I experienced warm flushing sensations, a sense of wonder and well-being, strong auditory hallucinations, which included an insect-cicada sound that ran across my mind and seemed to link my body to the earth. Though I was indoors, there was a sense of the feel of the earth, the dry desert soil passing through my fingers, the stars at midday, the scent of cactus and sage."

But we forego the psychedelic venom. As we approach a streambed swollen with rain, the call of our quarry—the burrowing tree frogs—becomes nearly deafening. Months and months of underground isolation now over, it's time to mate. Reeves and Hardin spot a male, his vocal sac expanding like a membrane of bubblegum as he breathes. A few minutes later, a female hops by to check him out.

Several years ago, at this very spot, Chambers and his then-girlfriend were surrounded by a dozen or more vigilantes toting assault rifles, who assumed that he was a drug smuggler or immigrant. He told them he was an American citizen and carrying a gun. A tense standoff followed, but luckily no shots were fired, and everyone dispersed.

Militia-type movements have popped up in every state that borders Mexico; there are now more than a dozen formal groups that see it as their duty to try to keep immigrants from crossing the border illegally. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has publicly discouraged such activity; meanwhile, the agency apprehended **414,397 people** unlawfully entering the country from Mexico in fiscal year 2013, an average of 1,135 people per day (or 47 per hour).

A few days after our frog hunt, we have our own interaction with militiamen. On a night when we probably should've been listening to the conference's keynote talk about ants, five of us—me, Reeves, Hardin, Chambers and **Isaac Powell**, a keeper at Zoo Miami—hike out to look for insects in California Gulch, a remote part of the Coronado National Forest less than 2 miles from the Mexican border. When we arrive, we set up two intensely bright lights, powered by two separate generators, as well as a blacklight, to attract insects, a common entomological technique. We also set up a white sheet between them for the bugs to congregate upon. Soon thousands of insects have flocked to it: silk moths, beetles, adult antlions, flies and innumerable

others. As we wait and sit back, watching, we enjoy local brews. “When you crack a beer, never get rid of the cap,” Chambers warns. “Otherwise, you're going to be eating a lot of bugs.”

After a while, the headlights of an SUV appear. The driver introduces himself as “Cody” and suggests we might be on his property. (We are certain we’re on national forest land.) Then the man tells us he’s a member of a militia; he shows us his hip-mounted pistol and an AR-15 he keeps in his truck, besides a skull-adorned mask worn while “on patrol.” After he leaves, an animated discussion begins, and Chambers makes his feelings clear about “rednecks who like to play G.I. Joe.”

Shortly thereafter, we see what looks like somebody’s headlamp coming toward us again, in the near distance. And then gunshots, four in rapid succession. I dive to the ground, moths fluttering about my head, as Chambers snaps off the generator. We pack up as quickly as possible and bolt.

The next morning, I wander around the conference bleary-eyed. “Things can get a bit crazy during the monsoon,” says a sympathetic zoo curator named Nate, who had heard about the previous night's encounter. “Too much alcohol, too little sleep, too many bugs.”

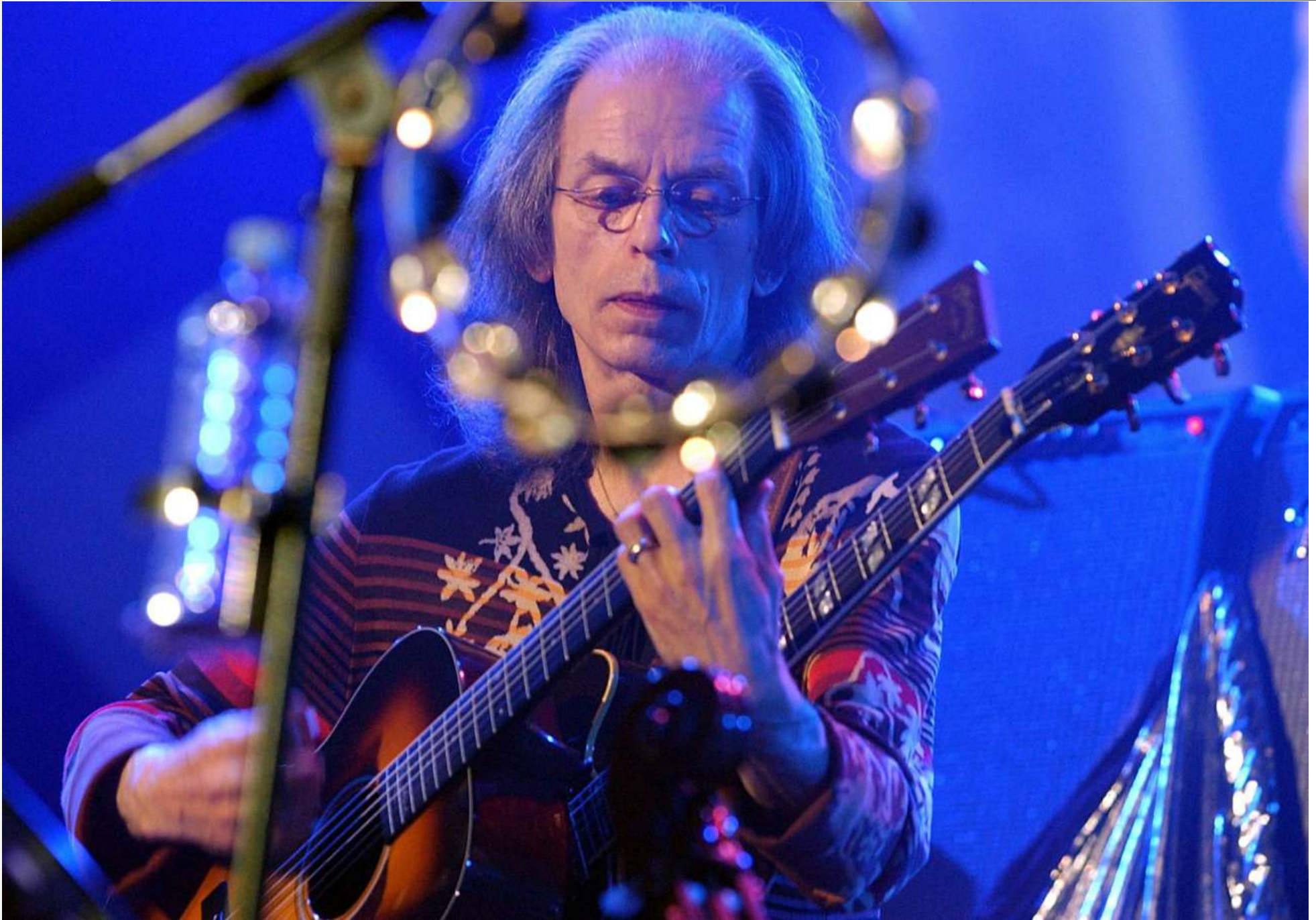
During our time in the desert, the entomologists make a couple of exciting discoveries. For one, they find a pregnant **northern giant flag moth** (*Dysschema howardi*), whose value Chambers estimates at \$700, between what people are willing to pay for a dried specimen and its egg masses. They can be raised on romaine lettuce with little effort. We also come across the rare and venomous **ridge-nosed rattlesnake** (*Crotalus willardi*).

“I want to hold it so bad,” Hardin says. “This guy is just asking to be cuddled.” But with willardi, and other venomous snakes generally, even Hardin refrains. A few years back, a man was found dead in this area of the Huachuca Mountains, with three willardi on his person. The

snakes once fetched up to \$1,000 in Germany, although it's illegal to capture them. Japanese dealers also once paid hundreds of dollars for rhinoceros beetles with large horn-like appendages found here called **western Hercules beetles** (*Dynastes granti*), Chambers says, recalling a past where the insects were sold out of briefcases in hotel rooms. But the Japanese figured out how to rear that beetle in captivity, and that trade has dried up.

Reeves decides to take home some sun spiders, arachnids that possess twin chelicerae, or fangs, that give them a fearsome appearance. Almost “nothing is known about these guys, and I'd like to start collecting material for a publication on them, down the road,” he says.

But they are also just amazing to behold for their own sake. One of the highlights of Schmidt's early experiences in the Arizona monsoon, and a reason he moved to Tucson, was “seeing a sun spider, that buzz saw of a lightning-fast eating machine, in the middle of a whirlwind of flying moth scales.”



STP New/Reuters

GETTING TO YES: AN ODE TO GUITAR WIZARD STEVE HOWE

STEVE HOWE, GUITARIST OF SEMINAL (THOUGH WRONGFULLY OVERLOOKED) ROCK BAND YES, HAS THE LICKS AND KEEPS ON TICKING.

The doors of the lift opened onto the lobby of the Hampton Inn in Des Moines on a recent August morning. A woman stood opposite the elevator entryway, sizing up the august and exotic creature opposite her: an ascetic-looking man with angular features; Scrooge McDuck spectacles; and

a lithe, boyish frame that might have seemed in contrast to his snow-white mane with tendrils flowing nearly down to his waist.

In short, a wizard. In Iowa.

“Can I get your autograph?” the woman asked Steve Howe, whose band happened to be lodging there in the midst of a grueling 27 gigs-in-37 nights North American tour. Howe, 68, was about to politely demur when the woman pressed further: “Are you somebody famous?”

The wizard smiled. Is Steve Howe famous? No... and Yes.

No: In its 46 years of existence Howe’s band, Yes, has never made the cover of Rolling Stone. Yes has not been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and faces no imminent need to prepare an acceptance speech. This summer, as 70-something rock stars such as the Rolling Stones (and 60-something rock stars such as Donald Trump) flit across the country on private jets, Howe, the band’s legendary lead guitarist, is literally traveling under the radar, driving with an old buddy from gig to gig in a rented Mercedes (and staying at a Hampton Inn).

“We’re fairly anonymous,” says Howe, who has written some of the most recognizable and iconic guitar riffs in rock history. “I’m little bothered by that.”

A short list of guitar wizards whose names are as familiar as their signature riffs: Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Pete Townshend, Keith Richards, Eddie Van Halen, The Edge, Slash and Jack White. Steve Howe is not in that pantheon. His artistry has always been so much more renowned than his name.

To say that the London-born Howe is almost famous is to note that his **opening instrumental** from Yes’s classic 1971 tune, “I’ve Seen All Good People,” appears in a key scene of Cameron Crowe’s 2000 film, *Almost Famous*. He can be as subtle as the 40-second finger-picking in E minor that opens

Yes's signature 1975 tune, "Roundabout," or as bodacious as the power chords that open "Heat of the Moment" by Asia (you may remember it from [The 40 Year-Old Virgin](#)), the early-'80s supergroup he was in.

As a guitarist, Howe has always had an appetite not for destruction but for eclecticism, playing everything from blues to classical to jazz to rock—occasionally all in one Yes song. He lacks a signature style unless you define excellence as a style.

"Steve won our annual readers' poll for 'best overall guitarist' five years in a row," says Mike Molenda, the managing editor of Guitar Player magazine. "That, for guitarists, is like winning the Oscar five years in a row. Steve was the first guitarist we put into our Hall of Fame."

"You'll never see Steve playing the guitar slung low in that sexy way," says Molenda. "He keeps the strap tight and holds the guitar up closer to his chest. It doesn't look cool, but it's more ergonomical."

Nobody does a Steve Howe air guitar improv, primarily because Howe does not comport himself like a preening "golden god" of rock. Never has. He has been married to the same woman, Janet, since 1968 (they have four children). He owns one car (Janet has one too). He has strictly adhered to a vegetarian diet since the early-'70s and cannot recall having taken any unprescribed pharmaceuticals for at least three-plus decades—and not because the use of psychotropic drugs has dimmed his memory. "I like a nice French wine now and then, but I don't like getting wasted," says Howe. "It doesn't get you anywhere but closer to death."

He meditates daily, a habit he picked up from a group of U.K. contemporaries who ascended to a slightly higher degree of international fame than he has. "The Beatles said you could get high without drugs," says Howe, "and I thought, Well, I have to try that."

Of course, John, Paul, George and Ringo got high with drugs, too, but that's another tale.

Howe is as much of a guitar geek as he is a guitar god, as someone who has put out 17 solo guitar albums—plus a few more live ones—is prone to be. His beloved 1964 ES-175 Gibson never leaves his home in Devon, England. When Howe used to travel with it, he'd purchase a ticket so it would have its own seat. He is his own Guitar Center, having owned as many as 155 guitars at once. Why? "I want to have all the colors of the palette," he says.

Howe's obsession with guitars began early. "When I was 10, I started this, 'Mom, Dad, I'd like a guitar' whine. They made me wait until I was 12. My dad took me to a shop in King's Cross, and we picked out an F-hole guitar for Christmas, 1959."

A few years later, he and some school mates played their first gig at The Swan, a pub in Tottenham. "We were underage. I was painfully shy. I stood on the side of the stage, played my songs, never looked up, and when it was over I thought, Well, that's enough of that."

But it wasn't. Howe is still somewhat shy, but if you ask him a question about guitars or guitarists he becomes almost comically garrulous. "When I was 16, I sat in the third row to see [legendary jazz guitarist] Wes Montgomery, and I'll never forget the smile on his face after he finished the set."

From Montgomery, Howe launches into an extended soliloquy on great players, a guitar solo of sorts, that references everyone from Chet Atkins to Les Paul to Steve Morse to Martin Taylor to "this new guy, a world-class guitarist from Italy, Flavio Sala—S-A-L-A."

After at least two minutes of uninterrupted exposition on the history of criminally underexposed guitar legends (excepting Paul), Howe stops to laugh at his own expense. "I'm big on guitars," he says. "You shouldn't have asked me about them, because I'm prattling on."

Not unlike a Yes song. If any band ever exposed itself to parody—and there is more than a whiff of Howe and Yes in guitarist Nigel Tufnel (Christopher Guest) and Spinal Tap, respectively, in the 1984 film, *This Is Spinal Tap*—with its earnestness and prog-rock leanings, it was Yes. The band's 1974 release, pretentiously titled, *Tales From Topographic Oceans*, contained just four songs, three of which clocked in at 20-plus minutes and one of which was titled, "Ritual (Nous Sommes du Soleil)."

"This has always been a pretty damn weird band," says Howe, "The idea of complexity was inherent in us."

As far as chord progressions or melodies went, Yes never wrote a book report when a doctoral thesis would do. Former keyboardist Rick Wakeman once recounted a show that involved a 10-minute percussion solo in which his role was so minor that he had a roadie bring him Indian take-out during the show. Howe recalls Yes opening for The Kinks and one of the Davies brothers becoming so irritated with Yes's expansive artistry that he pulled the plug on the amps.

"We had a fight backstage," says Howe.

Yes changed its lineup almost as often then as the New York Knicks do now. The band has had 20 different members, not including studio musicians, since its 1969 inception (bassist Chris Squire, the lone member to play on every studio album, died of cancer in June). Howe, for instance, left for 14 years. Only one man from their current five-member roster, drummer Alan White, even played on the band's biggest-selling album, 1983's *90125*.

"Yes is kind of like a French farce at times," says Howe good-naturedly. "There's a door slamming shut behind one guy as another door opens and another chap walks in. But if you join Yes, you've got to show respect for everything that Yes has ever played. Basically, if you say no to playing a song, that could get you the bullet."

Being the flag-bearers for “prog rock” has long been a mixed blessing for the band. At its peak, Yes drew more than 100,000 for a show at John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia on June 12, 1976. And yet, as Howe notes, “Rolling Stone did an entire book on rock music in the ’70s and only gave us three lines.”

If rock music appreciation included bonus points for degree of difficulty, Yes might be more revered. “Some bands just jam for 7 minutes between vocals because they have nothing better to do,” says Molenda, of Guitar Player. “What Yes was doing was writing mini-symphonies. This was sophisticated. This wasn’t, ‘Baby, baby, baby.’ Granted, we’d sit around in long-sleeved sweaters, sipping tea and saying, ‘I think what Yes was trying to say here is...’ ”

Howe is more blunt. “We’ve only ever attracted the people who have the intelligence to appreciate our music,” he says. “We don’t have as many lemmings following us, but we do have most every albatross.”

In its current incarnation, Yes has replaced lead singer Jon Anderson, 70, with 44 year-old Jon Davison, who looks as if he was just abducted from the cast of *Godspell*. Davison is able to hit all the high notes Anderson hit 30 years ago. At one point in the show, Howe sits on a stool on-stage, all alone, and plays an extended instrumental piece. We’ve all been exposed to masturbatory guitar solos—and used them as an excuse to hit the restroom—but Howe’s virtuosity is dazzling. Watching his fingers dance along the frets is like following Gene Kelly’s footsteps in *Singin’ in the Rain*.

“Steve Howe is a dedicated, obsessed musician,” says Molenda. “And he keeps himself in top shape because he cherishes every moment. It’s like Cary Grant staying thin into his 70s just in case a movie role came up. Why is he still practicing three hours a day alone in the dark? Because that’s who he is.”

The combination of Davison’s spry vocals and Howe’s genius on the guitar makes Yes an outlier, yet again, this

summer: a band from yester-millennium that sounds exactly like its vintage self.

“None of us are millionaires,” says Howe. “Nobody joins this band to get wealthy. I’m still that shy London kid. I just want to stand on stage and play. I’m not a rock star; I’m a guitar player.”



Judy Garland Museum

DOROTHY'S STOLEN RUBY SLIPPERS REMAIN AT LARGE

A \$1 MILLION REWARD FOR RUBY SLIPPERS FROM 'THE WIZARD OF OZ' THAT SOMEONE STOLE A DECADE AGO EXPIRES AUGUST 27.

On a clear day in June, a crowd gathered along the banks of the Tioga Mine Pit Lake to watch the Itasca County Sheriff's Office strap into scuba gear and dive for sunken treasure. It was the latest attempt in the decade-long search for a pair of ruby slippers from The Wizard of Oz that

had disappeared from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Judy Garland likely wore the pair in the movie; three other surviving on-screen pairs are known in existence. Rumor was that whoever stole the shoes got nervous and chucked them into the lake, which drops 225 feet. A 2005 insurance policy valued the shoes at \$1 million, but one appraiser now says if found in good condition, they could fetch at least twice that.

The dive failed to turn up the sequined pumps, but the case stayed hot. After hearing about the dive, an anonymous benefactor telephoned the museum and offered to finance **a \$1 million reward** for locating Dorothy's shoes. The news of the added incentive traveled fast, ending up in the pages of The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian and Us Weekly. Wuollet Bakery in Minneapolis began selling cakes depicting the slippers and "REWARD: \$1,000,000" written in icing. Marriott also **announced a reward**, independently of the museum, for whoever can locate the slippers by August 31—1 million Marriott Reward Points, worth \$12,500.

After only a few weeks on the table, the \$1 million offer expires August 27, the 10-year anniversary of the theft.



Collector Michael Shaw's ruby slippers, above, disappeared from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, in 2005. Credit: Judy Garland Museum

Since 2005, the case of the stolen slippers has put a spotlight on Grand Rapids, a timber town of 11,000 residents and the birthplace of Judy Garland. Locals are “decent, hardworking people,” says investigator Andy Morgan of the town police, who inherited the case about six years ago.

“Everybody was aware of the theft. It was top news, not only locally but far outside of locally.”

Shortly after 2 a.m. on August 28, 2005, a thief (or thieves) smashed a window in the museum’s back door and entered. They approached a Plexiglas case resting on a podium that contained the slippers, smashed the top, grabbed the shoes and fled the way they came in. They took nothing else and left behind no fingerprints or clues—only a trail of broken glass from the door to the case and a single red sequin. Dorothy’s slippers had slipped away.

The size 5.5 slippers, in good condition and hand-labeled “Judy Garland” inside, belonged to Michael Shaw, a southern California-based collector whose haul includes the tablets and golden calf from Cecil B. DeMille’s 1956 Moses epic, *The Ten Commandments*. Five or so times, he had rented the shoes to the Judy Garland Museum for the summer, charging the museum a few thousand bucks. The theft happened a week before Shaw was to come collect them.

“I literally felt like I was hit in the stomach when I got the call,” Shaw says. “My knees buckled, and I went right down on the floor. I had taken care of those shoes for 35 years!”

The museum folks were devastated too. “I cried,” says Jon Miner, the museum treasurer and co-founder. “I couldn’t believe this happened to us because it was the stupidest thing.”



The stolen shoes belonged to Shaw, above, a California-based collector. Credit: "Who Stole The Ruby Slippers?" Documentary

The museum had an alarm system and video surveillance, but neither was operating at the time of the theft—a detail that would raise suspicions that the theft was an inside job. Other people speculated that Shaw had paid someone to steal the shoes—perhaps replicas—so that he could collect insurance. Kyp Alexander, a private investigator who worked on the case, says, “There’s a lot of theories surrounding this. You could say there’s as many as Area 51 had, as far as conspiracies or theories.”

Four months after the heist, Essex Insurance Company took Shaw, the museum and its director to court before shelling out \$1 million. The company claimed the museum had voided its insurance policy by not disclosing changes to its security measures. The parties settled in 2007 and Shaw received \$800,000.

“The insurance company, they investigated me upside down, inside out,” Shaw says. “They realized I had nothing to do with it. And basically the museum knew it too. They were reaching at straws to try to throw the guilt away from themselves.”

While Shaw and the museum played the blame game, police and private investigators continued the hunt. “Tons of attention and resources were given to chase down any leads,” Morgan says. Tips came in from all over; Miner estimates they received 1,000 calls. People said they spotted the slippers at a garage sale in Virginia and stapled to a restaurant wall in Missouri. A radio station was apparently giving them away in New Hampshire.

One tip brought the search to San Diego in 2011. A man had reported a home burglary, and when law enforcement visited him, an investigator noticed he had ruby slippers. The man said he had received them from a former lover. The investigator got a search warrant, but upon closer examination, serial numbers and other details didn’t match Shaw’s pair. Those slippers were likely fakes.

At one point, Essex Insurance **reportedly offered** \$200,000 to whomever could find the slippers, and a museum board member kicked in an additional \$50,000. But by the time Morgan took over the case around 2009, the leads had dried up. “I don’t want to say it became less of a priority,” he says, “but with it being handed down, and no new information coming in, the file just continued to sit.”



At least four pairs of ruby slippers believed to have been worn by Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz" exist today. Costumer Kent Warner found three of them, plus an off-screen test pair, in storage in 1970. Credit: Warner Bros.

The Start of the Yellow Brick Road

Memorabilia experts say they don't understand how an item as significant as Shaw's ruby slippers could vanish without a trace. But the story of the slippers began that way. Film historians have said that in 1939, when MGM released *The Wizard of Oz*, studios didn't think twice about preserving costumes. It wasn't until 1970 that costumer Kent Warner discovered several pairs of authentic ruby slippers in storage on the MGM lot. (It was common practice to make multiple sets of costumes.) He sold one pair to Shaw for \$2,000 cash, along with Dorothy's dress, the witch's hat, a Munchkin outfit and a gown from 1938's *Marie Antoinette*. Warner also sold a test pair, not worn in the movie, to actress Debbie Reynolds for a reported \$300. Warner gave an additional pair to an auctioneer and kept a final pair for himself (though he told the auctioneer that pair was the only one).

According to accounts, the pair of ruby slippers was the highlight of that 1970 auction, which took place on the same soundstage where MGM had filmed *The Wizard of Oz*. The slippers sold for \$15,000, the most expensive costume item in the multiday auction. But days later, a Memphis woman told reporters she too had a pair of authentic ruby slippers, which she had won as a contest prize in 1940. With that revelation, the public realized multiple pairs existed. Four on-screen pairs and one off-screen test pair have surfaced, and collectors have paid more and more to get their hands on them.

Rhys Thomas, author of the 1989 book *The Ruby Slippers of Oz*, has spent decades tracing the histories of each pair. The person who bought the auction slippers donated them to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in 1979. Dwight Blocker Bowers, a Smithsonian curator, says they keep the pair in a locked, alarmed case, under 24-hour guard surveillance. "Any kind of tampering with the case would immediately send a message to the guards' office," he says.

The Memphis woman sold her pair in a 1988 auction to a collector for \$165,000. That collector loaned them for display at Disney World, before selling them at auction in 2000 for \$666,000 to a group of collectors and investors. One of them, David Elkouby, tells *Newsweek* they keep the shoes in a bank vault. "We were collectors, and for us, that's the ultimate prize."



An anonymous person donated a pair of authentic ruby slippers, pictured above with a Smithsonian archivist in 1996, to the Smithsonian's Museum of American History. Credit: Mike Segar/REUTERS

Warner sold his slippers in 1981, three years before he died of complications related to AIDS. They went for only around \$12,000. But a few years later, in 1988, that anonymous buyer sold them to a collector for \$165,000.

In 2012, that collector sold them for \$2 million to a group purchasing them for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which included Leonardo DiCaprio and Steven Spielberg.

Reynolds auctioned off her pair in 2011 for \$627,300. Called the Arabian Test Pair, it has a different design, with beads over the sequins and curled toes; Judy Garland wore the pair only in screen tests. Two memorabilia experts believe the buyer is from the Middle East, where collectors have **in recent years** spent more and more money to acquire art.

Unless Shaw's pair resurfaces, only Elkouby's is likely ever to return to market. "The Smithsonian is never going to sell their pair, so that's locked up, and I can't imagine the Academy will ever sell this pair now," says Laura Woolley, an appraiser who has appeared on Antiques Roadshow and has appraised authentic ruby slippers. "What it really means to me is that last private pair, the value of that one has grown exponentially."

Woolley suspects that if found intact, Shaw's slippers could sell for even more than the \$2 million pair, thanks to the added publicity around the theft. But if they're destroyed, she says, "they become kind of a grave marker for what happens when you don't properly guard against thievery in this world. I think for far too long people have taken this area of collecting far too casually."



Actress Debbie Reynolds reportedly bought an authentic pair of test ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz" for \$300 in 1970. She sold them in 2011 for \$627,300. Credit: Fred Prouser/REUTERS

No Place Like Home

“The shoes themselves are worthless,” Michael Shaw told Rhys Thomas, the author, decades ago. “It’s what they are and what they represent.”

At the Judy Garland Museum today, the empty podium still stands, not that anyone needs a reminder of what happened. There’s bad blood between just about everyone involved: the private investigators and the police, the museum and Shaw, Shaw and Rhys Thomas. Misinformation is rampant, and everyone is skeptical of everyone else’s motives.

“There’s a lot of distrust and distaste left in their mouths, for sure,” Kyp Alexander, the private investigator, says of Shaw, the museum and the police.

The latest person (or people) to join the saga is the anonymous benefactor who has offered \$1 million for the

slippers' safe return. Museum officials say the benefactor is a wealthy family that is "a friend of the museum" and has connections to Grand Rapids, Judy Garland and The Wizard of Oz. The benefactor initially agreed to a phone interview with Newsweek, which the museum coordinated, but then got cold feet and reneged, the museum says.

Rhys Thomas, among several others, is skeptical such a benefactor exists. He says he believes the museum is only trying to drum up interest for its imminent sale of another piece of Wizard of Oz memorabilia, a horse-drawn carriage from the movie that supposedly Abraham Lincoln once owned. (Miner, the Judy Garland Museum treasurer, mentioned that item several times in an interview, as did a museum spokesman.) However, the museum offered to provide Newsweek with a notarized letter from benefactor's attorney confirming his or her or their existence.

Thomas says the world of ruby slippers is a rabbit hole as full of whimsical—and perhaps wicked—characters as Oz. "They're an object of intense obsession," he says. "The ruby slippers just command so much interest and overpower the individual who owns them."

"Everybody's a little nuts, but they're nuts for a really good reason," says Morgan White, who is working on a documentary, *The Slippers*. "They are the kings of collecting. They got to own the thing that everyone wants."

Compared with collecting art, says Woolley, the appraiser, "there's a much deeper emotional connection [with memorabilia]. Most people encounter these objects or develop a fondness for them in childhood. And when you grow up and suddenly you're an adult with money to spend, you can recapture something from youth," she says. "Most of these things kind of turn people back into children."

People who have followed the case say one theory has endured over the years—that local teens stole the shoes as a prank, got scared and ditched them. "People know who did it, but they're just not talking," says Theodore James,

another documentary filmmaker, whose film *Who Stole The Ruby Slippers?* premiered at AFI Docs in Washington, D.C., this summer.

White agrees. “All signs seem to point to the fact that these kids did it,” he says. “They’re probably sitting at the bottom of the mine pit and nobody will ever see them again.”

Thanks to the publicity surrounding the \$1 million reward, tips have started coming in again, Miner says. “After time goes by, people are a little loose with their tongue, so we’re hearing things that we never heard for the last 10 years.”

Still, police say the statute of limitations has run out, and some people are skeptical that the sleepy museum and local law enforcement have a clue how to handle a heist that Woolley compares to the one at Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, where Rembrandts and other masterworks **were stolen in 1990.**

“It’s a multimillion-dollar art theft. They don’t think of it like that,” White says, referring to the museum and police. “They thought that it would go away, and it didn’t go away.” The shoes are not listed in the FBI’s art crime database.

If the slippers do reappear, they will belong to the insurance company. Shaw, who turns 78 next month, sounds at peace with that. “There’s more to my life than a pair of pumps,” he says. “I have no desire to have them again. After years of bringing joy and happiness to so many thousands and thousands of people by being able to see them, now to me they’re a nightmare.”

He ends a phone call with *Newsweek* by saying, “I’m not going to talk about it anymore. I’m sick of it. They’re gone.” Then he quotes another Hollywood classic: “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn.”

SOLE CYCLE

Graphic by Max Kutner

The Wicked Witch of the West wanted Dorothy's ruby slippers. From Leonardo DiCaprio to a rumored Middle Eastern billionaire, here's who has actually owned pairs.



Roberta Jeffries (later Bauman), 16, wins a pair in a contest in 1940. They arrive in a shoe box.

In 1970, **costumer Kent Warner** finds at least 4 pairs in MGM storage. One sells for \$15k at auction.

The auction winner donates the shoes to the Smithsonian in 1979. In 1981, Warner, auctions a pair for \$12k.

Someone steals a fourth pair, which

Michael Shaw bought from Warner in 1970 for \$2k, from the Judy Garland Museum.



In 2000, David Elkouby and other investors buy the Bauman pair for \$665k—**and seal it in a bank vault.**

In 1988, Bauman auctions hers. Weeks later, Warner's sell privately.

Each pair fetches \$165k.

In 2011, actress **Debbie Reynolds** sells an off-screen test pair she bought from Warner for \$300 in 1970, for \$627,300, likely to a Middle Eastern collector.



Leonardo DiCaprio and Steven Spielberg help buy the Warner pair for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. **Price=\$2 mil.**

In July 2015, **an anonymous fan offers \$1 mil.** for information leading to the return of the Judy Garland Museum pair.

Photo 1: Mike Segar/REUTERS; Photo 2: Andreas Latif/REUTERS

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Credit: Max Kutner



Graham Roumieu

YOU'RE 100 PERCENT WRONG ABOUT TINDER

THE DATING APP ISN'T HORRIBLE. DATING IS HORRIBLE.

On Christmas, I flew to Prague to spend the holidays with a beautiful and hilarious Estonian girl I had never met—not in person, anyway. We dined on blood sausage and potato salad. On New Year's, her Russian friends cooked dinner, and we all went out to watch the fireworks on the Charles Bridge.

I have Tinder to thank for that. A month earlier, the Estonian girl and I had matched on the dating app, as I was

about to board a train for Paris. We talked over the next few weeks and decided on a crazy first date. We're friends to this day.

I realize that one person's experience doesn't sum up anything, that even the most colorful anecdotes can't really rebuff the myth that has crept into the American consciousness: that Tinder—that app wherein users swipe right to choose (or swipe left to reject) potential mates—is a wretched realm for shallow sex addicts, ruining not just monogamy but dating itself. This argument reared its head again of late in a piece in *Vanity Fair's* September issue, “Tinder and the Dawn of the Dating Apocalypse.” Most of the story is based on man-on-the-street-style interviews that presume most people use Tinder for sex and then confirm most people use Tinder for sex via interviews with people who use Tinder for sex.

The author, Nancy Jo Sales, is missing the point. So are most people when they vent about Tinder and how it has ruined dating/love/monogamy. Their argument is overly obvious: that it's too easy to find a new (sex) partner, and therefore nobody settles down anymore, swiping the moment something goes wrong in a relationship. But this lament ignores two important elements: what dating was like before online dating, and what online dating is like now.

Don't you remember? Dating has always sucked. Your options were: meet through friends (and our circle of friends tends to dwindle as we get older, so that stops working by one's mid-20s); meet at a bar (kind of like meeting on Tinder except when a guy comes up to you and says something creepy, you still have to engage instead of just putting your phone down); meet at Whole Foods (which never happens); and so on. These options were so terrible that we all endured months-long “droughts” in which eligible single people dated no one and instead watched VHS tapes and ate popcorn every Saturday night.

Tinder has a terrible reputation for being a “hookup app,” but let’s remember that before it came along the top two online-dating options were Match and OkCupid. On both of those sites, women had to sift through dozens of boring or creepy messages to find anything worth responding to, and guys copied and pasted hundreds of boring or creepy messages because they grew so accustomed to being ignored that there was no point in spending time crafting the perfect message to the perfect girl. Tinder works better than anything else because you can’t message anyone unless they pick you too; that’s why it’s popular.

But here’s the point everyone misses: It’s still a numbers game. Most dates suck, because most people suck. All Tinder did was increase the chances for both men and women to meet new people. Any reasonably well-adjusted person in a reasonably sized city who spends enough time swiping and chatting could go on a few dates a month. Most of them are going to suck, yes. But that’s how it was before too, only spread out over a longer period. Back then, we just blamed dating. Now we blame Tinder.



Alessandra Benedetti/Corbis

COMING TO THE RESCUE OF ITALY'S GHOST TOWNS

**THOUSANDS OF GORGEOUS, HISTORIC ITALIAN
VILLAGES ARE FALLING TO RUIN, AND ONLY A
HANDFUL OF RICH GUYS CAN SAVE THEM**

Italy's Santo Stefano is a jet-black volcanic island in the Tyrrhenian Sea, in an atoll near Rome. From the days of the Bourbons up to 1965, it was considered Italy's Alcatraz—a centuries-old prison packed with anarchists, revolutionaries,

criminals, bandits and political dissidents. Today, it's deserted.

Visitors still come to Santo Stefano, but they must first walk along a steep, rocky pathway flanked by prickly shrubs and hungry mosquitoes. The prison is now a crumbling horseshoe-shaped fortress at the top of the rocks. Nearby, its village's colonial villa is also still largely intact but certainly decaying, along with the jail's offices, bars, shops and a field where inmates once played soccer with guards. Any surrounding gardens and fields are long dead, consumed by the encroaching wilderness that threatens to swallow the village in slow motion.

Santo Stefano is one of over 6,000 ghost villages in varying states of disrepair that dot Italy's coasts and countryside. And even that staggering number may soon increase, as another 15,000 towns are currently on the verge of total abandonment due to financial instability, emigration and natural disasters like earthquakes and floods. Though Italy boasts 50 UNESCO World Heritage sites, the most of any country in the world, keeping up its artistic heritage—especially during an economic downturn—has proven a nearly impossible task for the Italian government.

Help could be on the way, in the unlikely form of rich businessmen with a preservationist bent. Though Santo Stefano's prison is owned by the Italian state (which has been shopping for an investor to build a resort on the land), the surrounding village belongs to Orazio Ciardo, a Neapolitan businessman who has launched an ambitious (and somewhat bizarre) project to resuscitate the island. His plan involves creating a nude-friendly resort that will take advantage of the town's natural surroundings and require only minor additions—like a platform carved out of volcanic rock for sunbathing and an area for sleeping tents. The primary goal is to maintain and recast, not replace, the island's wild natural beauty.

Ciardo is one of about 10 visionary businessmen who have spent the last decade-plus snatching up crumbling historic villages and trying to give them a second life. Though they all have different approaches, their common goal is to help refashion Italy's historic past to fit into its present.

Hotelier Paolo Galante purchased the ancient Roman village Foro Appio in the 1990s. Though most recently a way station for travelers on the Grand Tour, it had long been a stop for officials and citizens traversing the Appian Way, the Roman Empire's only highway connecting Rome to Capua. It had a short life as a medieval cheese-making hub, but by the 1900s it had been abandoned. "When I first got here, all I found was a heap of broken stones and dusty pillars covered by a thick forest," Galante tells *Newsweek*. "But despite the mass of ruins, I sensed this place was packed with history and that there was something precious and sacred buried underneath."

According to Scripture, Foro Appio was where Saint Paul gathered his earliest Christian followers. The legendary Roman lyric poet Horace also stayed here on a trip that stuck with him enough that he wrote about it in one of his *Satires*. Galante says the area's history was instantly recognizable: "There were old stone pavings and bits of Roman vases sticking out of the ground. I've always loved history and archaeology, and I knew it was a valuable site."

Along with his brother Maurizio, a fashion and interior designer, Galante spent nearly two decades building a luxury four-star hotel called Foro Appio Mansio, which now boasts 35 elegant rooms that coexist with the town's preserved historical layout. The construction unearthed parts of the original Roman highway, which now runs through the village on which the resort sits and is used as a walkway for guests. Vases, amphoras, statuettes and majolicas jut out of the plastered walls, and what was once an old marketplace where travelers tied up their horses has been repurposed as

an open-air cocktail lounge. In all, almost 80 percent of the main building's original architecture, last refurbished in the 1700s by famed Italian architect Giuseppe Valadier, has been preserved.

"Recovering this Roman hamlet means exploiting its tourist potential but also revamping the local economy, mainly based on agriculture and cattle-breeding, by creating new jobs," says Galante. "People used to live in the village, and now something from that life is coming back. It's no longer a ghost town. I have employed dozens of people, and the hotel is constantly overbooked."

Hotels and resorts aren't the only option for revitalizing Italian ghost towns. Borgo Castelluccio, a small village in the rugged Abruzzi hills, saw its population dwindle to nothing in the early 1900s, after a series of earthquakes terrified the locals, who abandoned it. Enter Italian-German entrepreneur Michael Filtzinger, who determined that the town—full of crumbly medieval buildings—could have a fruitful new purpose as a getaway for German families who could purchase the refurbished structures as vacation homes in the sunny region. And, like his peers who also work to bring ghost towns back to life, Filtzinger has been primarily concerned with preserving the area's history. "In 1986, my father purchased these ruins formerly inhabited by wolves, bandits, prostitutes and partisans fighting fascism," says Filtzinger. "I worked 10 years rebuilding this village, spending over 4 million euros on materials. So it wasn't profit that moved me, but the allure of history and art, and my deep passion for both."

Two other businessmen in the Abruzzo region have done almost the same thing by these rescuing disaster-hit towns. Simone Mariani is restyling the village of Borgo Rocchetta—where, until the 1950s, shepherds used to live in cliffside, vertical houses without roads or electricity—into modern homes that nod to the town's history without blighting **its environment**. On an even grander scale, Swedish-Italian real

estate heir Daniele Kihlgren began purchasing ghost towns in Abruzzo a decade ago and has so far amassed over 10 of them. One of these, Santo Stefano di Sessanio, has been turned into a luxury resort that, like Galante's Foro Appio, is spread out over the town's excavated historical center.

Though it's unlikely Italy's government will be able to afford preserving most of these historic towns anytime soon, perhaps it's better that they're finding new life—and new ways to interact with modernity—in the hands of their unlikely heroes.

01

UNIFORM APPEAL

Beijing—With a show of military might, China marked the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II with a military parade September 3. President Xi Jinping used the occasion to announce he would cut 300,000 of the country's 2 million enlisted men and women. Most of the reduction will take place domestically as the country shifts its priorities from protecting its borders to the international stage through modernizing the navy and air force. The move comes at a time when foreign nations are concerned about China's land claims in the South China Sea, the Pacific Ocean and along the Indian border.



02

LAW V. LAW

Morehead, Kentucky— Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis tells David Moore her office won't issue him a marriage license on September 1, despite the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling making same-sex marriage legal nationwide. Arguing that issuing a marriage license to two men would violate "God's law" and her beliefs as a Christian, she filed an appeal asking for a religious exemption. The court declined to hear her appeal, but Davis still refused to issue any licenses. On September 3, she was jailed for contempt of court and the first same-sex marriage licenses in the county were issued the next morning by her deputies. Despite the court's ruling, many religious conservatives and most of the Republican presidential candidates have supported Davis.



03

CHANGING CUSTOMS

Guatemala City—Just hours after he resigned, former President Otto Pérez Molina arrives in court on September 3 after a judge issued an order to detain him pending the conclusion of a hearing involving a multimillion-dollar customs fraud case. Pérez Molina was already under order not to leave the country when Congress lifted his immunity from prosecution. It was a scene almost unimaginable for much of the nation's history, largely marked by military rule, civil war and repression. His resignation followed months of street protests demanding his prosecution, highlighting the changes buffeting the Central American country. Pérez Molina, who once ran the military's intelligence agency, is the first Guatemalan president to resign due to corruption charges.



Esteban Felix/AP

04

BABY STEPS

Gevgelija, Macedonia—A policeman carries a baby to safety as asylum seekers try to enter from Greece at this border town on September 2. Tens of thousands of people—mainly Syrians—have fled violence in the Middle East and are attempting to reach Western Europe through the so-called Balkans corridor. As hundreds of desperate refugees rushed the border, some families were inadvertently separated when police allowed groups of only 50 or so at a time to pass. The EU is under renewed pressure to come to terms with the growing crisis since the publication of a photo of a 3-year-old Syrian boy who drowned and washed ashore in Turkey.



Ognen Teofilovski/Reuters